

THE ROCK COMMUNITY CHURCH

1 Timothy 5:1-16

“The Care of Widows”

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26:51

Good morning. Welcome to The Rock. So good to see all of you here today. Pastor Drew is taking a short, well -deserved break. Thank you all for being here. And I especially wanna thank Pastor Mike for teaching the entire baptism class during the announcements today.

27:14

So I can sleep in next week, I guess, right? Okay, we are starting a new chapter in our study of 1 Timothy, chapter five. As you're turning there, let's open in prayer. Father, as we continue our worship service in the study of your word, we ask now, Lord, that you would help us to set aside the cares of the weak, Lord, and that we could focus on what you have to say to us.

27:41

We ask that you speak to our hearts and our minds, Lord, and by your word, Lord, as we walk through this dark world, Lord, we know that your word gives us light on that dark path. So we ask now for you to reveal yourself to us in Jesus' name, amen.

28:01

So chapter five, first, we have 16 verses to try to go through and understand in a very short period of time. So we'll be moving quickly. First of all, the first two verses is a very brief paragraph.

28:21

It's simple, and it deals with the matter of confronting sin in the spiritual family. Now, the church of Jesus is known by many metaphors in the New Testament. For example, it says that the church is a holy nation.

28:41

The church is a priesthood. It's the branches on the vine. It's a temple we're referred to as a body, an assembly, and a flock. But there's one more picture of the church that really fits the text that we're looking at, and that's that we are a family.

29:01

And the general characteristics of the church as a family is that we would love each other. Jesus said in John 13, by this would all men know that we are his disciples if we had love one for another.

29:18

Now, within that framework of love for one another is a very necessary element. Not a very pleasant one, but that has to do with confronting sin. It's true in a family and it's true in a church. Confrontation of sin and disobedience, it's just part of being a family.

29:41

Now, no thinking parent would ever say, I don't care what the kid does, let him go. He's got his own life to live, right? No. Love says, I care that you know the blessings of God, and that's exactly what Paul calls for in these first two verses.

30:01

So let's take a look at them. He says in verses one and two, do not rebuke an older man, but encourage him as you would a father. Younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters in all purity.

30:18

So Timothy was in this family at Ephesus, and as it were in Ephesus, they had some very serious sins going on. And we've been studying first Timothy, I think we're well aware of what's been happening there.

30:35

Timothy was in a family that desperately needed some correction because a little will leaven will leaven the whole lump, it has to be confronted. And Timothy knew the scriptures well. He knew that in Job chapter five, the scripture says, behold, happy is the man whom God corrects, therefore despise not the chastening of the Almighty.

31:03

God has always wanted to eliminate sin in his family. So now how should that be done? That's our text for today. First of all, it should be done fearlessly. In Titus two, it says rebuke with all authority.

31:22

You do it with courage, you do it with authority. And then Titus chapter one, he says rebuke them sharply. That means you cut right to the issue. We're also to be loving and we see that in second Timothy, chapter four, we are to reprove, it says, rebuke, exhort with all patience and teaching.

31:50

So verse one of Timothy five, when you go to confront sin, it says do not. And then the word rebuke, it means just what it says. It means in the sense of a harsh or violent rebuke, harsh words. So you don't get violence, a strong term, and it actually means somebody that hits somebody with their fists.

32:12

So when we rebuke someone, we confront their sin, we're not to beat them metaphorically or hammer them with words. He says encourage, appeal or strengthen. I like the word strengthen because it's a positive thing.

32:29

It means that we're called alongside of somebody to help them. The Holy Spirit does that. The Holy Spirit is the comforter and the word of God comes along and strengthens us. The Holy Spirit comes beside us and we are to come alongside and strengthen.

32:48

Now having sent that principle out, he's gonna illustrate that in four different age groups. The first one in relation to older men we're not to be harsh or violent with older men but to strengthen them as a father.

33:05

So when an older man sins, how does a younger man confront him? Well, we wanna remain in respect and we wanna go to him just like we would go to our father. So secondly, how do you confront sin in a relation to a younger man?

33:24

He says here in verse one, the younger man as brothers. So if the word for confronting a father is respect, the word for a younger man is brother. Why? Because confronting a brother, we do it in humility because we are equal.

33:41

Our brothers are equal. There is no superiority assumed here. There are no levels in that word. Brother, we're both the same. In chapter six of Galatians, it starts out with the word brothers. If anyone is caught in a transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness.

34:06

Restore, that is a word it means to overhaul, to restore to the original condition. You bring him back where he used to be, but we do it in the spirit of meekness. Why? Because we realize we could be in that same situation or be tempted to do the same thing.

34:26

Thirdly, in relation to older women, Paul says, older women as mothers. And Proverbs repeats that we should honor our mothers and listen to the law and the teachings of our mothers. So how would you go to your own mother?

34:44

That's how we would go to confront sin in an older woman. We would go with a great amount of gentleness. We might be straightforward, but we certainly would be loving and gentle. As an illustration of this from Paul, Philippians chapter four, Philippians chapter four, Paul has to go and discipline a couple of women in the church.

35:09

And these women had been part of a team that helped in the gospel ministry, but apparently, they had become contankerous and argumentive. But notice how Paul approaches this in chapter one, verse four.

35:26

He starts out with this real loving approach. Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved, long for my joy, my crown, stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved, and you know you're just about to get smacked because it's so overdone.

35:43

But that's Paul needing to rebuke these older women, but letting them know that he loves them. And then he says, I beg you, Euodia and Syntyche, that you be of the same mind of the Lord. Quit fighting in public.

35:59

So love and gentleness as to a mother, that's how you deal with them. And then finally, he says to Timothy, here's how you have to deal with younger women. Now, Pastor Drew touched on this last week.

36:15

You must deal with them, he says, as sisters with all purity. Sisters, scripture is clear that young women are to be protected in purity. And he says to Timothy, now when you go to confront the sin of a younger woman, make sure you treat that young woman as a sister.

36:39

See, a pastor needs to be very careful in his relationships with the opposite sex. Nothing can destroy spiritual life in a church more than sin in this area. That means morally in the sense of desire you are indifferent.

36:57

That's why it's so corrupt when a pastor goes to counsel a young woman, ends up committing sin with her. And it's such a common thing that it needs a warning. And all of you probably in your mind right now can think about some great men of God that have fallen because of this.

37:19

And then the apostle adds, whoever deals with younger women to deal with his sisters. So now Paul is going to move into the subject of widows in the church. Beginning at verse three. This is our section on widows of the church.

37:42

Now it might seem like this is a rather small subject, certainly not a weightier subject that we would be concerned too much about, but just the opposite is true. In fact, Paul's

gonna speak from this issue from verses three all the way through 16, a very long discussion on widows of the church.

38:04

Now this instruction is for Timothy who is giving the church, the leadership, in Ephesus, but it's for our instruction as well. The care of widows in the church is a very vital issue. And let me begin our thinking by saying, without exception in God's design, women are to be the special object of care.

38:33

Women are to be the special object of provision, preservation, and protection. Now God tells us that the woman is a weaker vessel, man the stronger vessel, and is her protector. She is to be under male protection, provision and authority, direction.

38:55

Peter in chapter three says, likewise husbands live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since you are heirs with you in the grace of life so your prayers won't be hindered.

39:13

So because of this, widows or women without husbands who have lost their husbands, therefore they've lost their means of support or very special concerns to the heart of God. And this passage is today, we're gonna see a glimpse of God's heart and of his compaction.

39:35

So when they lose that area of protection, God takes up their case, so widows in are a very special concern in the heart of God. In the Old Testament when a woman was widowed, the Jewish law, the brother of the dead husband would marry her, or if he was married, the next of kin would raise up, would marry her so he could raise up godly seed and bring her under care and protection.

40:05

You remember the story of Ruth and Boaz, that's what the story's about. So in the Old Testament, we find two major ideas regarding the widow. Number one, a woman who's lost her husband, she comes under special care for God.

40:23

She's encouraged to find number two, shelter in another marriage for the proper kind of support. In the New Testament, we also find Jesus demonstrating his heart, the heart of God, towards widows. You remember the widow of Nain, she was about to become destitute because her only son had now died and she was left alone.

40:50

No problem for Jesus, he raises her dead son to take care of her. Peter did the same thing in the book of Acts. He raised a dead woman to help take care of the widows. So let's read verses three through 16.

41:08

Honor widows who are truly widows, 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.

41:25

She who is truly a widow, left 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, but if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his own household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

41:55

Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than 60 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, cared for the afflicted and has

devoted herself to every good work, but refused to enroll 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.

42:27

Besides that, they learn to be idolers, going about from house to house, and not only idolers, 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.

42:47

For some have already strayed after Satan. 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.

43:03

Now that is a bunch of scriptures. So let's run through them and see if we can figure this out. So the first principle, so first Paul wants Timothy and the Church of Ephesus and us to understand our responsibility to widows.

43:25

So he's gonna lay out for us five principles. The first one, verse three, honor widows who are real widows. So a little background here to where Paul's coming from, since the beginning of our study in first Timothy, we have seen this epistle to be polemic.

43:42

That is to say it's speaking against some problems. So this is a corrective passage. The heart of God will come through as the Lord speaks about widows. And to show you the high priority of that, in Acts chapter two, when the church began, what did the church do?

44:03

They studied God's word, they had communion, fellowship, and prayer. There was no ministries yet. They didn't have 180. They didn't have a Sunday school class. They didn't even have Rock of Ages. What was the first ministry in the church when it began?

44:22

It was a ministry for the care of widows. And you can read about that in Acts six and Acts chapter nine also. So principle number one then in verse three, the obligation to the church to support widows.

44:37

I want you to notice the word widow, because this is the basis of our understanding, are there widows that are real widows. So what do we mean by widows? Well, we all use that term pretty much the same way.

44:52

And if you look in the dictionary, we have the dictionary, it says, a woman who has lost her spouse or partner by death. That's what we know what to mean. But I'm not really interested in what Merriam-Webster says that means, I wanna know what the word means, the author that wrote this letter.

45:13

So the Greek word includes that meaning, but it's not limited to that meaning. The word widow is kera, it means bereft, it means robbed, it means having suffered loss. It carries the idea of being alone, robbed.

45:32

So the word doesn't speak about how a woman got into this situation, it just describes the situation. But usually of course we would think of it through death, her husband has died. But there's nothing in that word that indicates that it's limited to that, it could be death, it could be divorce, it could be desertion, it could be anything.

45:54

She is without a husband for whatever reason. So honor widows, what are we talking about here? The word is honor, that's what we're to do for them, we're to honor them. So what does that mean? Well, it means to show respect, right?

46:11

Show care, it means to give support. It encompasses the idea of meeting the needs, whatever they are, to provide financial aid and assistance. In Matthew 15, Jesus is interpreting the 10 commandments.

46:28

In Exodus 20, he says that honor means financial support. The fifth commandment, honor your father and mother, Honor meant to give them money when they need it, take care of them. So now who are the widows to be supported?

46:53

It said honor widows that are real widows, or depending on your translation, truly widows or widows indeed. So what does that mean? Truly distressed, alone, without resources. So the second point is the church needs to evaluate these widows that need support.

47:18

It's not a question of everybody getting in line and we're just gonna hand it away. There's gotta be some criteria and that comes in verses four through eight. Verse four, 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.

47:44

So it's the first, the responsibility of the children and the grandchildren to support that widow. Learn first to show their godliness in the family. That's where we show our true godliness. It's not how many Bible studies we go to, or how many songs we sing.

48:01

How are you behaving in your home? Godliness in the family. So the family is the first responsibility to take care of widows before they're ever put on the church's list of responsibilities. Now he's going on to define a widow.

48:21

Here's the criteria, verse five. Has set her hope on God. She's not only in a condition of being without means, but she's in the condition of presenting herself to God as her only hope. So here is the kind of widow to be supported.

48:43

A woman who trust in God and that godliness is now seen in the next phrase. She continues in supplication and prayers night and day. So the fact that she has fixed her hope on God shows that she's a Christian.

49:00

The fact that she continues in prayer continually shows that she is a committed Christian. Now my ad here that this is not, the idea here isn't to set up some standard and say, well now that you're a widow, you get your spiritual act together, we'll take care of you.

49:20

No, the idea is these are women that already are these type of people. The idea is to identify that kind of woman who already honors God and say, that's the kind of woman we wanna support. And to show you how specific it is, look at verse six.

49:39

On the other hand, she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives. So in other words, the woman, the widow that goes out and lives her life for her own pleasure and satisfaction, she may be living physically, but spiritually she's dead.

49:58

Now notice verse seven. Command these things as well, so they may be without reproach. What things? Everything since verse three. You command this to your people, Timothy, that they might be blameless, whether they are families that should be supporting widows or where they're widows that should be living properly.

50:24

And then verse eight, he wraps up his second point with this statement, 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.

50:42

I think that's one of the strongest statements in the Bible. You say, I didn't think Christian could be worse than an unbeliever, yeah, you can. Now what's he saying here? You're worse than an unbeliever.

50:54

He's not talking about loss of your personal salvation. He's not judging a soul here, he's judging the actions. Rather it means that the person who doesn't take care of his own has denied the principle of the Christian faith and that is the compassion and heart for others, for God so loved that he gave, right?

51:19

It's about giving and for a believer to fail to measure up to that standard is inexcusable. So that brings us to verse nine and now verse nine and verse 10, there's a shift in the subject, but it's still about widows.

51:41

But the purpose of what's being said here is different. So the third principle is the obligation of the church to maintain a high standard for those widows who serve in the church. So let me set the scene here.

51:58

In the early church, there were a group of widows who were given a semi -official status. We know from chapter three that we have elders in the church, we have deacons in the church, both male and female, which are official offices.

52:16

But there was another sort of quasi -group of officials, and that was the older women, the older widows, excuse me. And they had a responsibility to minister to women. They would be fulfilling the instructions of Titus, let the older women teach the younger women.

52:41

So let's read the qualifications in verse nine and 10. Let a widow be enrolled, or put on the list, if she is not less than 60 years of age. Having been the wife of one husband, 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.

53:10

So these women were assisting other women, younger women in divine instruction, godly instruction, and practical matters. And they were going from home to home. They would be visiting the sick. They would be assisting women with the raising of their children.

53:30

They would be helping with strangers, visitors, travelers. So the design here is not when you hit 60, you pack up and go to Palm Springs or Hawaii. No, the design is when you lose your husband and you're that age, you go into ministry.

53:49

You move out of your home and you start moving around to other homes that you may instruct and teach them. So let's look at the qualifications for being part of this group. Verse nine, number one, let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than 60 years of age.

54:12

Well, what about 59 or 61, why 60? There's a whole historical background for that. But the key idea, 60 is just a point of reference. The key idea here is that when a woman is over 60, she's less likely to remarry.

54:34

And second, it says in verse nine, she needs to be the wife of one husband. It doesn't mean she's only been married once because in verse 14, he says, I would have younger women to remarry, right? So in first Corinthians seven, Paul says, a widow should marry again only in the Lord.

54:58

So it has to be a Christian. So what kind of a woman goes on this list? A woman who is mature and she has lived her faithful and devoted life to the husband she had. Now, verse 10 adds a third qualification.

55:13

She has to have a reputation for good works. So it's common knowledge what kind of a woman she is. A reputation for good works. Now for that, he gives us five sub points. It's a checklist for the kind of woman that would go on that list.

55:32

The profile of a godly woman. This is the kind of woman you would put on the roll because this is the kind of woman you want all of the women to be, okay? Number one, verse 10, if she has brought up children.

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So this sees her as a Christian mother bearing and raising children in a godly home, which is one of the greatest privileges of a woman. And we saw that in chapter two, verse 15. Now this does not mean a woman who cannot have children or has been gifted with singleness is a lesser woman.

56:08

This is just a general pattern. In fact, in 1 Corinthians chapter seven, Paul exalts single people. Secondly, verse 10 says if she has shown hospitality, that literally means received strangers. Her home must be open, not only to friends and relatives, but to strangers.

56:34

She must care for the needs of people she doesn't know in her home, open her home. Our society seems to think a woman's place is in the mall. So thirdly, and follow the same idea, verse 10, if she has washed the saints' feet.

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Now that doesn't necessarily mean she's actually done this. Maybe yes, it was a task for the lowest servant in the house. But washing the feet spoke of metaphorically of humility. She is to be a humble person, have a servant's heart.

57:12

And fourthly, it says she has cared for the afflicted. That simply means that she has assisted people in trouble. Could be translated better, those under pressure. She's helping people that are under pressure, any kind of pressure.

57:29

Mental, physical, emotional. And that would also include with her financial resources if able. And finally, she has devoted herself to every good word. So this describes a woman who has diligently and energetically given herself to the pursuit of good deeds.

57:53

She has spent her life doing these things. So put her on the list and send her out to minister. That's the kind of woman who is to be put on the list to serve the church. Then that also is the kind of woman that every woman should desire to be.

58:12

That's the point. The standard of this list is for every woman. This is how every woman should seek to live. Remember in chapter three, we were going through the qualification for elders. Well, those qualifications for the elders is the qualifications for everybody.

58:34

That's the bar that we're trying to achieve. It isn't, one group has a different standard than another group. No. So now wouldn't there be other women that would want to be on this list of servants in the church?

58:52

Yes. And we come to them in verses 11 through 15. The point of verses 11 through 15 is simple. While older widows are to devote themselves to the service of the church, the plan for younger widows is very different.

59:13

Younger women who have lost their husbands are to remarry. You can't miss that. Verse 14, I would have younger women, younger widows, marry. Paul's concern, one of his concerns is a younger widow during the grief of her loss for her husband will make a vow that she can't keep.

59:40

She says, yes, I'm going to remain single for the rest of my life and I'm going to serve God and you only. But that's why in verse 11 it says, Paul says, but refuse to enroll younger women. For when their passions draw them away from Christ, they desire to marry.

59:57

So that's the issue. While they are an outward model of spiritual virtue, they could become resentful to God at best, unfulfilled and miserable. We're still a strong desire for a husband would leave her vulnerable.

01:00:19

She might even be tempted to go after somebody else's husband and to Paul, this was a dangerous situation. And the second reason that younger widows are not to be on this list is their lack of maturity.

01:00:32

Verse 13, 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 visits once carried out for the purpose of ministry become occasions for idleness.

01:00:54

It takes a serious-minded, mature woman to minister to the homes and the families. Now, when they would be ministering in these homes, the secrets and the problems of the family would be well known.

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It would be safe with a mature woman, but the danger is that when they abandon their commitment to Christ, this could be a bad deal. So Paul just simply forbids younger women to be put on that list.

01:01:29

Therefore, Paul writes in verse 14 to 15, I would have younger women. Younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander, for some have already strayed after Satan.

01:01:50

So verse 15, Paul's warning to the Ephesian church was timely because some have already turned aside to follow Satan. Some of the younger widows have already abandoned Christ. Their vows to Christ.

01:02:06

And the final point, verse 16, 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. So here at the very end, Paul comes full circle to his argument, the truth that he has already taught in verses four through eight.

01:02:31

A widow's children and grandchildren have the primary responsibility. Then comes the male relatives. After that, the female relatives. Only when such people are unavailable or unable does the task fall on the church.

01:02:48

Now what do we mean by the church? Well, you are the church and I am the church. And we are to do that if we have the resources to support them. If we don't just come to the church as a body collectively and to have them do it.

01:03:08

So first, the responsibility is on us. But it should be our joy as individuals to do that. You say, well, why should I be so eager to give my money away? Well, let's ask Moses. I think he's got a principle here that we all wanna know.

01:03:31

Deuteronomy chapter 14, and it says, the fatherless and the widow who are within your towns shall come and eat and be filled. This was God's law for his people. That the Lord your God may bless you and all the work of your hands that you do. Why should a person be so eager to support a widow to receive the blessings of the promise of blessings from God? Why should I pass it off to someone else or the church when I can get the blessings, right?

01:04:12

So let's pull all this together as we conclude. And we're gonna do that by looking at a couple verses in John chapter 19. John 19:25-26. And this is, I think, a fitting illustration to conclude this morning.

01:04:44

We see Jesus hanging on a cross. He is near death that we find him. And standing by the cross of Jesus who are his mother and his mother's sister who was Salome, Mary the wife of Cleopas and Mary Magdalene.

01:05:02

In verse 26, when Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved, that's John, the writer of the gospel. He never uses his own name, but he always identifies himself as the one that Jesus loved.

01:05:20

I think that's great. Next time somebody asks you who you are, say, I'm the one that Jesus loved. Really, how do you know that? Well, then now you can tell him the whole gospel. And they ask the question.

01:05:34

The disciple who he loved. Jesus said to his mother, woman, behold your son. He wasn't calling attention to himself, he was calling attention to John because he then said to his disciple, look, your mother.

01:05:54

And from that hour, that disciple took her into his own home or literally as his own. She became his, why? Because women were to be cared for. Jesus didn't stand the cross. Mom, get a job, no. Understand this, Jesus commits his mother to John, why?

01:06:15

Because Joseph is long gone. Mary was alone as far as a husband was concerned. She had now lost the love of her son. The promised son, the son of virgin birth. She was left only now with unbelieving brothers and she didn't wanna be in their care.

01:06:37

And so in loving compassion, Jesus commits her to the care of John to take care of her. And this tells us something absolutely monumental about what we're learning, the importance of what we're learning.

01:06:54

Jesus hanging on the cross only spoke to two individuals. One was a vile, wretched criminal hanging next to him, a thief bound for hell, who Jesus forgave and took to heaven. The other was his widow mother that he made sure of her care.

01:07:16

Nothing more reveals the heart of God than when Jesus is dying on the cross, bearing the sins of the whole world, gathering all of eternity past and eternity future into one great redemptive climax. Two things preoccupy his mind.

01:07:37

One salvation of a sinner and the care of one widow. That is the heart of God, the heart of compassion towards sinners and women in need. Let's pray. Father, we thank you. We thank you Lord for that reminder today of what you've called us to do.

01:08:01

Lord, we ask for forgiveness for our many failures. And Lord, we pray for the widows in our church. We ask that you would help them in your grace and you would provide for them that they might be fulfilled in every way.

01:08:17

We would pray as well for the raising, Lord, of godly children keeping our homes sanctuaries of faith. Lord, we ask you to make us faithful to have the heart of Christ, who in bearing the sins of the world was concerned about his mother. Cause us Lord to walk in obedience to your word and your will. And let us know Lord, the blessings that comes to those who obey the Savior. Amen.