

Family Matters (1 Timothy 5:1-16)

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Preacher: Albert Tang

[0:00] I'll be reading from NIV. 1 Timothy 5, verse 15. Verse 5. Chapter 5, verse 1. The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help.

But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. Give the people these instructions so that no one may be open to blame. Anyone who does not provide for their relatives and especially for their own household has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over 60, has been faithful to her husband and is well known for her good deeds such as bringing up children, sharing hospitality, washing the feet of the Lord's people, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds. As for younger widows, do not put them on such a list, for when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, they want to marry.

Thus, they bring judgment on themselves because they have broken their first pledge. Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house, and not only do they become idlers, but also busybodies who talk nonsense, saying things they ought not to.

[1:51] So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes, and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander. Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan.

If any woman who is a believer has widows in her care, she should continue to help them and not let the church be burdened with them, so that the church can help those widows who are really in need.

So quite an interesting passage. I don't know if you took it in. Maybe some questions, but let's open up our hearts and listen to Moksi's sermon. Thank you.

Nice to see you all. I missed. I haven't been at church for two weeks because I was in Taiwan, and I had to make a few, kind of stop over in Hong Kong for a few days to see people.

It was a good break for me. And I was very encouraged to join this missions conference, just seeing how God works through the Chinese Baptists around the globe.

[2:54] It was very encouraging. Yeah. We have a chance. We can share. I'm sure that we, I think Grace will share later on, Grace Lee, and maybe Anthony, if he has time to come to share as well.

Well, right, God, the gospel, proclaim the word. That was, this is 5th and 2nd Timothy.

So I want to share with you, oh, that's not this one. Sorry. Can I have the other, I think I've given the wrong one to, I think the, as the family, it's right, it's the thing right next to it.

Sorry, my bad. All right. Now, this, how, what do you think of this phrase? Marriage or family is lifelong, but not eternal.

How, what do you think? What immediately come to you? Now, if you come from a kind of broken family, you're going through some family trauma, praise the Lord, it's not eternal.

[3:58] I have hope, right? But if you come from a sweet family, a warm family, and it makes you think, oh, no, one day it will come to the end. Right?

But, but really, this, this phrase actually do mark something reminding us, even though how good the family here on earth, the biological families, how good it can be, it will end one day.

Either my folks will depart, I die, right? Or Jesus comes back, it will end one day.

It's not eternal. And it may be a relief for some who actually have broken families, right? Goodness me, justice, wow, wow, one day we have hope, right?

But it, but it, but it points something that, what is eternal? What is eternal? This is eternal.

[5:08] Our blood tied in Jesus. You and I, as brotherly and sisterly relationship, this church, this family, this local church, this church is in Auckland, all worship the Lord, acknowledging the Lord as Savior, right?

The global church, this is eternal. And this, can you imagine, this relationship, you know, despite what ethnicity, language, nationality, all belong to Jesus, and we will be in eternity together. Now, that, that really got us thinking, right? And this is something that will last and last forever. So, look at the person next to you, in front of you, behind you, right?

Whether you like him or not, like her or not, they are going to be with you forever. You better, you better make, I mean, you know, cultivate a relationship, because you're going to be with him in eternity, all right?

But, and it does remind us, you know, now, in this present age that we have here with our biological family, and also with our church family, I mean, this is the interim, right?

[6 : 50] And this, this bracket here, we actually are overlapping, all right? With our present family, and also our eternal family. We give thanks for our present family, our biological families.

Whether they, it's good or not so good, but this is, this is where we came from. And God promised that, you know, we come from these families, whether, how perfect, how imperfect they can be. God can change and transform them. But praise God also for the spiritual family, for the church, that from now, from the day that we know Jesus will belong to this family, and this relationship carry on forever.

And sometimes, church families can be messy. Because we come from a sinful, we are sinful, and we bring in, and how good or how bad the church is, it all depends on me, on you.

If a church is loving, and loving, and affectionate, and that's because God's work in us, transforming us.

[8 : 11] But also, we have our bad side, our darker side, you know. And sometimes, when sinners meet together, and we rub shoulders, and we can hurt one another, intentionally or unintentionally.

We are imperfect people. So, at church, we need to exercise. This is why the Bible is full of teaching of how, you know, teaching us how to forgive, to accept, to, yeah, to forbear.

Right? This is church. Church is not perfect. Church is a bunch of forgiven sinners, not perfect people.

You and me, you and I, are sinners, only forgiven. And sinners gather together at times, we can cause pain and hurt to one another.

That's why we need the love of Jesus. So, this particular passage we're talking about today, chapter 5, right? We have been read.

[9 : 26] Okay. And it actually, Paul was instructing Timothy, him as a pastor, the appropriate manner in relating to different people at church at the time.

Not just for pastor, not just for Timothy, but for all of us. I think we need to have appropriate manners to relate to different people. Not just even just, not just the English service.

Maybe on Saturday service, some people you know. On Sunday service, there's a lot more elderly folks. Especially, there are some needy ones.

And this particular chapter was pointing at the widows. Okay? So, this passage for us today, I believe God's teaching us we need to pray and seek wisdom in our interpersonal relationships in church.

It's all well we can treat those ones we love or we like. But often we neglect those, you know, not as lovable and maybe troublesome.

[10 : 39] But if we are in the family, we need to love as Jesus loves us. And helping those in need.

So, I want to share three R's with you today. One is relationships in church. Second, regulations for caring widows. And requirements for family members.

They all in the 16 verses in chapter 5. Now, I think we're in chapter 5 already. So, in the first 1, 2, 3, 4.

And last week, Pastor William spoke about chapter 4. Right? It's about how Paul was instructing Timothy. You set a good example. Okay? Chapter 1 was warning the people about the false teachers.

Chapter 2, instructing the brothers or sisters in church how they behave. Chapter 3, establishing bishops, deacons.

[11 : 42] Right? And chapter 4 was, Timothy, you set yourself as an example. Don't let people look down on you. Okay? Remember those fellows? I looked at the video and thought, oh, that was my handsome self 30-something years ago.

Right? And you were there, right, Sheila? Yeah? Was it? And Isaac? Right? And yeah. I mean, we all were young. Yeah. We're young and restless.

But praise God that God is bringing us maturity as we grow. Okay? But here in chapter 5, no matter how young we are, how old we are, we are in this family.

Okay? We need to relate in godly ways. We need to care. And also in our own existing biological families, we need to have obligations that we need to fulfill.

So let's look at it one by one. First, relationships in church. Verses 1 and 2. Do not rebuke an older man harshly. I believe I qualify as an older man now.

[12:56] So do not rebuke me harshly. Even at times, what did you say I can't hear because I have hearing problems now? Be patient with me. Be patient with elderly folks.

Okay? Do not rebuke. And sometimes older people, you know, because of losing a lot of their abilities, we can be, yeah, we can be difficult at times.

All right? By the time you reach my age, you will know. All right? By the time you reach my age, I'll be gone. Right? So I think everybody will have their turns. So because we're older families and we need to treat one another with kindness.

Yes, you can point out the faults, but do it in a kind and godly way. Exalt him as he was your father.

Right? So do not rebuke. And in verse 2, older women, treat them as mothers. Now, in a kind of a passive way, do not rebuke.

[14:04] But in a proactive way, treat them like your fathers, mothers. Now, don't just immediately think of your situation right now.

In those times when Paul said, treat the older man as your father, people know immediately respect. A lot of today, I mean, people today, if I treat you as a father, I wouldn't even have nothing to do with you.

Right? I think our culture in our day is very different from the culture in the biblical times. Treat older men as your father means respect. Respect means manners.

Right? Means honors. Okay? So, and later, I mean, this is actually saying that parents, older men as your father, older ladies as your mother, brothers and sisters as, I mean, they are siblings.

And we are all in a family. And this word, God's household, is actually the word oikos. Oikos means family.

[15:26] Okay? And Paul, in chapter 3, verse 15, 1 Timothy, said, You know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household.

The church is God's household. God's family. And because this church belongs to God, and because all of us, when we belong to God, we are one family.

Okay? And we need to love and treat one another in godly ways. And in verse 2, at the end, especially when he points out to treat younger women or older women as sisters, Paul points out something to Timothy.

Why? Why? Why? Why did Paul say that? Because Timothy was a relatively young pastor.

I'm sure you know by now. He was kind of timid. He was kind of introvert. And he's sort of, he's not a sporty type.

[16:41] He's kind of a, physically he's not very healthy. Right? And sometimes when ladies look at a guy like that, would have some sort of affection unto him.

He was a public figure. And he was not strong. And maybe he wants some sort of affection from sisters at church.

And that could be a source of temptation. And I'm sure we have all heard about how pastors, I believe it's not just pastors, but leaders or brothers and sisters at church, you know, cross the line. There's a lot of these temptations. That's why Paul reminded Timothy, you as a young pastor, you have your youth desires.

And be careful. Treat your sisters with absolute purity. Respect them. Keep the boundaries. Do not, do not cross the line.

[17:57] That becomes a warning for us all. You know? At one point it says that we need to love and respect one another.

But on the other side, it also reminds us that, yes, we need to care, we need to show affection, but with boundaries.

So that we don't cross the line. Right? So this is the relationships in church. Let us love, but let us keep it very pure.

Right? And secondly, regulations. Now, especially for widows at a time. Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need.

Now, then they pointed out the list, the conditions of widows. All right? The widow who was really, really in need and left all alone but put the hope in God.

[19:07] That means widows, they had no one to turn to, no resources, no family, help at all. And also, she was 60 years old and over.

Okay? And compare in verses 11 to 13, those younger ones. So it was a very detailed description of widows at a time.

Now, today, 65, you get your gold card. All right? And it's a little bit different. And in New Zealand, our social security is pretty good.

So probably the church might not need to contribute too much to caring for widows. But we do have caring funds. All right? If any, I don't see any widows here.

Right? But anyone in need, you can apply. And with condition, of course. And the point is, the church do need to provide for those in need.

[20:17] Okay? But here, this particular description, it says, those widows, they were truly in need.

Okay? Not just given to anybody whose husband has died. Because if younger ones, Paul actually encouraged, it's okay to remarry.

All right? Because once your husband or your spouse has died, that bond has kind of ceased.

Right? And you're free to remarry. Okay? That's different from getting divorced and remarried.

The Bible did not agree with that. But once your spouse has died, you're free to remarry. And Paul actually encouraged them to get married. Right?

So that you have a husband, you have a family to support you and to care for you. But for those widows, why 60 years and over?

[21:16] Who wants to marry a widow 60 years and over? Right? And also for 60 years and over, probably you will not get employed.

Right? Right? Even today. Very hard to get a job when you get old. Right? Right? Right? So, these were really, really in need. Economically, financially, they were in need.

Resource-wise, no help. But also, the very important condition, they actually rely on God. In verse 5, they put their hope in God and continue day and night to pray and ask God for help.

Those were the ones that Paul said to Timothy, give proper recognition to them. Care for them.

Provide for them financially. Right? So, today, we probably do not have too many widows, not in English service anyway.

[22:24] But maybe there are some on Sunday service. Okay? There are. There are some. And, yes, that New Zealand security system is pretty good.

They get their, you know, I'm getting my pensions too. Right? I'm 66 now. It's very handy to get \$800-something every two weeks. Pretty good.

And for widows, they get more. All right? So, they may not be exactly the same needs as the time in the Churchill.

So, Ephesus. Those were the times that really, really, if the church did not provide, they would have staffed. Okay?

But today, there are still people around us that are in great needs. It may not be financially, but emotionally. Practically.

[23:19] So, you know, there are some overseas students. On Saturday, there are a lot of overseas students. You know, during those festivals, Chinese festivals, Kiwi festivals, you know, those days when they may be alone.

No one to care. You guys, you know, you're going to road trips. What about those poor guys that are just eating instant noodles at home? We can care for them. Right?

And, yeah. What about those who are actually, who have practical needs? Like families would have SEND children. Do you know what SEND children are?

Special education needs. And they might need our practical help. And there are people who are financially quite difficult.

And we as a church, we can offer help. There are many ways we as families, we can provide care.

[24:27] Not just professionals. I think the best support and care come from amateurs like you and me. Just think.

Just pray. Lord, how can I help? How can I show care in this church? And lastly. Oh, yeah.

James 1.27 says, Religions that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless. What? Not just reading the Bible. Not just able to recite the Bible verses. Not just to serve in a church. But what? To look after orphans and widows in their distress. This is true religion to God.

Not just doing religious stuff. But practical helping people in need. That is one thing that God accepts and delights in.

[25 : 38] Right? And we can all do that. And lastly. Requirement for family members. Now, we're still in this context of caring for widows.

But Paul says, For those who have widows in their homes, let those family members put their religions in practice by caring for their own.

Right? Don't just send them to church. Don't just give the responsibilities to church. You as family, I as a family member, I have the responsibility.

I have the obligation to care for them myself. And do not put the load onto the church. The church has the responsibility to care, but for those without resources.

If for those who have resources, me as a family member, I have the need to care for them, support them financially, emotionally. Right?

[26 : 55] In that way, for the caring for my own family, I'm to repaying. Any thought about repaying them?

Oh, really? I have to repay my parents? What's that word? That word actually, it's actually talking about obligation. Returning the goodness, the favor that they once gave to us.

To give back. It's not just very Chinese, alright? But it's very biblical. I think Chinese, I'm not sure if you guys understand this concept, but I think your parents really would know we need as parents, we need as family members, we need to practice this filial piety.

Right? I'm not sure the Kiwi culture has that. Okay? I'm sure they do, but I think there's something I think resonates better in the Chinese, in an Oriental family situation.

Repaying. Because in doing so, this is pleasing to God. So it's not just Chinese, not just Oriental, but it's biblical. In repaying, showing respect, showing our love to our parents, our grandparents, this is something that is pleasing to God.

[28 : 22] Now just think. Okay? Almost all of us would not remember when our mother or father pushed us in those wheels.

Right? Because we were too young to remember. We hadn't even seen the pram because parents sold that pram or given to others.

Right? But, maybe, if we, one day we have to, we have to, I would say, the opportunity, privilege, to push my elderly parents, I had the opportunity, I had the privilege, to push that wheelchair for my mom, I give thanks for the opportunity.

Will you? Just look at it and reflect. If one day, God gives this opportunity, responsibility, privilege, do so in grateful ways because we're, we're paying them and this is pleasing to God. we all age. This is something God has installed into this human family relationship.

[30 : 13] So, this particular requirement is for us all. There's a reason behind it because if we're not providing for our relatives or families, we deny our faith.

And they're worse than an unbeliever. Right? Just imagine if there are people, non-believers, non-Christians saying, you guys, you're talking about the love of God but you abandon your parents?

You don't even care for them? What kind of religions? What kind of faith are you talking about? Who, what kind of God are you believing? Right? We're not, we're not proving our faith because, oh, we have to do that.

No, no, no. It should be, it should come very natural. And in doing that, our testimony, will we, will we, yeah, the people can see and, oh, yes, because they love God, because they're Godless love and because they love God and that comes so natural that they care for their parents and their relatives.

Right? And the results, not just people will see but the church will not be burdened with them and the church can help those who are really, really in need.

[31 : 38] So, chapter 5 is very, very practical. In fact, the whole of the 1st, 2nd Timothy are very practical issues that Paul was instructing Timothy as a pastor to deal with matters at church.

And particularly today, family matters. Whether it's church family relationship or our own biological families. let us assume those responsibilities and let us by doing so honoring our God and making this family more lovable.

I believe as we, as we, as a family, I mean, it's different like going shopping, all right? I mean, sometimes people come to church, we will like going to Pack and Save or Countdown or New World, you know.

Oh, this Pack and Save offers cheaper stuff as this kind of branding but, oh, Countdown did not have it or New World's too expensive so I go to Pack and Save and just, you know, this kind of mentality, oh, I come to PCBC English because time is handy or because, oh, there are beautiful girls here or, there are guys who are handsome.

No, we're not in this kind of consumer mentality. No, we're here as a family. The need, there are needs there. I, as a family member, I will meet those needs because I belong to this family.

[33 : 21] I won't criticize my family. If there are any, anything that's lacking, I, as a family member, I try to meet needs to make the family more, more, yeah, more lovable, more, yeah, honoring to God, we should have that kind of mentality.

So, God only gives us this bracket here. we can practice this love.

Praise God to love our existing biological families, whether it's lovable or not. God is teaching us to love them.

But also, God has given us this church, the spiritual family, which lasts forever. and we can exercise the love of God in amongst us.

Right? Family is lifelong. We need to cherish it until my very last breath.

[34 : 37] But we have something even more eternal, more blessed than it is you and me.

in the family of God. Let's pray. Father, I just want to thank you for, yeah, for how you have brought me from my family, from my mother, my father, even though, yeah, I experienced trauma in my early childhood.

But Lord, thank you. Nevertheless, this is the family you have given me. and also give thanks for this spiritual family of PCBC. Thank you for pastors.

Thank you for leaders. And thank you for, on Sunday morning, Saturday evening, and thank you for English service. Thank you. There are different kinds, different types, different nationalities, different ethnicity.

But Lord, in you, the blood of Christ has made us one. even though we're different, but we can be united because God, your love, your salvation have bind us together.

[35 : 53] So Lord, help us to relate to one another in godly ways and help us to care for those who are in needs.

And also, Lord, help us as family members to look after our own so that the church can have the resources to care those who are in really in needs, Lord.

Thank you for your word and may your spirit to continue to inspire us to, yeah, just to remind us to do your will, Lord.

In Jesus' mighty name. Amen. Amen.