

# Honourable Leaders (1 Timothy 5:17-25)

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 22 June 2025

Preacher: William HC

[ 0 : 00 ] I will be reading 1 Timothy 5, verses 17-25. The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honour, especially! those whose work is preaching and teaching. For Scripture says, Do not muzzle an ox while! it is treading out the grain, and the worker deserves his wages. Do not entertain an accusation against an elder, unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. But those elders who are sinning, you are to reprove before everyone, so that others may take warning. I charge you in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels to keep these instructions without partiality and to do nothing out of favouritism. Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure. Stop drinking only water and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses. The sins of some are obvious, reaching the place of judgment ahead of them. The sins of others trail behind them. In the same way, good deeds are obvious, and even those that are not obvious cannot remain hidden forever.

Thank you, Eden, for reading that, and thank you, church, for listening in. I didn't prepare a cahoots, so you can turn your phones back off or into flight mode. And do keep that passage open, though, because that's where we'll be as we are continuing to journey through the book of 1 Timothy together. Fantastic. Okay. Why don't we ask God to help us as we hear from his word? Let's pray. Gracious Lord, we thank you for this short but challenging passage. Help us as we hear from your word today to honour elders who lead beautifully, to shame those who don't, and in all this to guard the gospel, a word and teaching before you. You are the only one that we want to please and serve. And so we pray all these things now in the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen. Let me ask you a question. Are good leaders born or are they made?

Where do good leaders come from? Are they born or made? Or maybe I'll phrase it, are they found or are they kind of formed in a place? Have a think about that question.

[ 2 : 48 ] And perhaps how you answer the question will depend on your culture or your context. Some of you might recognise this guy, right? In North Korea, whether you become a leader or one of his associates will really depend on your what's called songbun or your social status.

The family you're born in, the connections that you have. In this secretive Asian society, you're destined to be rule or to rule. But if you talk to many other parts of the world, right, you might get a different answer, right?

There are lots of world leaders' biographies out there, including, you know, Jacinda's recently. And as you read these biographies, for some of you who have read them, the stories, they kind of repeat themselves sometimes.

It's people who forged their own destiny or who took up a great opportunity, who achieve great things, whether through their kindness or their intelligence or their cunning, whatever.

And so we get different answers, don't we? Are good leaders born or made? Are they found or formed? It depends. We're talking about leadership a little bit today, because here in this letter, we presented lots of practical issues, aren't we?

[ 4 : 07 ] Paul writing to Timothy. But in a sense, this whole letter has actually been a leadership letter, right? Paul, kind of the senior, instructing, encouraging, giving life lessons to Timothy, the younger leader.

He's kind of mentoring his spiritual son in the faith. We saw that phrase, right? You, my true child in the faith, chapter 1, verse 2. And mentoring him, leading him, teaching him how to lead through some of the toughest issues that Timothy was facing in the young church of Ephesus.

Who remembers the pressing issue? Why this letter in the first place? Anyone? Two words. False. Teachers.

Yeah, false teachers. Right? That's the pressing issue. You remember that? Chapter 1, verse 4. False teachers among the church plants in Ephesus, right? What were they doing? They were fixed on myths and endless genealogies rather than God's plan of salvation.

And there were even people specifically named, right? Hymenaeus and Alexander. You wouldn't name your pets or your kids that these days. Well, maybe Alexander. Misusing God's gracious law. [ 5 : 21 ] Opposing healthy teaching that lined up with the glorious good news of the blessed God. And they were not, these were teachers who weren't going around preaching in the villages.

Christ Jesus came to save sinners. They were teaching something else. A devilish kind of, kind of following rules as the gospel, right? And we even hear some of these things, right?

No, no marriage allowed. Or, ooh, these foods are forbidden. And if you eat them, you'll never get into heaven. Hmm. Hmm. So, like a young Padawan, Timothy is listening to advice from his older Jedi master, Paul.

Paul has been urging Timothy time and time again, no, God is our Savior. He's the only Savior.

Christ Jesus, he's our hope. He's our only hope. So, exhort these things.

Teach them. And did you notice in that passage that Eden read, right? 1 Timothy 5.21, we get to hear kind of the main theme of this letter again, right?

[ 6 : 22 ] What does Paul say? I hereby testify before God and Christ Jesus, these things, right? These instructions you must guard. Do you see that?

Guard the gospel. Keep these instructions. That's Timothy's mission. It's Irene's mission, as we heard, and the team.

It's our mission today here at PCBC. Because God the Savior is watching us. Yet, throughout this letter, and particularly last week when Moksi was preaching from the start of Chapter 5, Pastor Albert, I wonder if you noticed a slightly different world to the one we lived in here in 2025 in New Zealand.

Right? This world that Pastor Albert was talking about, a world not just seen through the lens of kind of who's right and who's wrong, who's guilty, who's innocent, but a lens that actually Paul explicitly names in this chapter two times.

All right? Honor. Did you see that word show up? We heard it last week, right? The word honor. Give proper recognition. In other words, honor to those who are really in need.

[ 7 : 33 ] And then here, in verse 17, certain leaders worthy of double honor. At this point, let me ask you then, what's your way of viewing the world?

What are the categories that shape the way that you see things? All right? Have a chat to the person next to you. Here's a few common ways that people see the world. Ask the person next to you, are you a guilt, innocence kind of guy?

Or are you more an honor-shame kind of girl? Have a go. Just have a go. Have a go. What do you think about most? Which of these words kind of resonate or pop up in your head most often?

Have a go. 20 seconds. Go for it. What's your worldview? Yeah? Yeah? All right.

Okay. Put up your hand if you mention guilt, innocence, or right or wrong. Yeah? Okay. Put up your hand if you, there's more than one, is okay. If you talked about honor and shame.

[ 8 : 36 ] Some. Yep. Right. Okay. What about fear and power? A few. Okay, Irene. Pleasure, pain. Yep. Okay. Okay. Every congregation will have a mix of all of these worldviews.

Imagine these are like glasses that you lay out before you. I'll pick these glasses today. Or I'm wearing these glasses today. We talk about worldview a lot in some places. And these are different ways of seeing the world.

And I want to suggest that for most of the world, and actually nine out of ten unreached people groups, honor and shame is the main way they see the world. It's kind of like the default operating system, OS, that people run on in our world.

Honor and shame is kind of why at the start of Disney's Mulan, the animated one, not the other one, the dad doesn't say to her, you broke the law.

Right? What did he say? You dishonor me, daughter. Right? Instead of an inner policeman or an inner therapist, most of our friends and neighbors go through life with kind of like an inner grandparent telling us, you know, oh, like this, or, oh, you know, lifting you up.

[ 9 : 49 ] Honor, shame. Right? That's how a lot of us think. A lot of our friends and family think. We need to know this because, especially us in the second generation, when we forget to look through honor, shame glasses, we make lots of mistakes.

I make lots of mistakes. Some of my biggest relationship stuff-ups, whether it's in a PCBC meeting or whether with my next-door neighbors from another country or my work colleagues who have a different faith, most of my stuff-ups and mistakes come because I've forgotten the glasses that I'm wearing or that other people are wearing.

This intercultural difference will also then help us better appreciate what's going on in 1 Timothy.

Right? Paul has been instructing Timothy about life in God's spiritual family so far.

Right? And in families, there's a lot more about honor and shame rather than right and wrong. Paul has subverted kind of the honor-shame culture of his time. With the gospel. Right?

The gospel changes everything, including how we honor and shame people. It says, men, you should pray. You should do the humble, lowly thing of praying. Don't leave it to other people.

[11:02] It says, women, you should learn. It elevates women and says, this is an honorable thing for you to do. Don't let them look down on you, Timothy, because you are young. Right? Again, these are honor-shame statements.

And do you remember last week, right? Do look after your relatives. He doesn't say because the law says so. He actually says, unless you look worse than an unbeliever.

Right? He's trying to use honor and shame to spur people into doing what's right under God's eyes. Significantly for us, right?

We've also heard in chapter 5, verse 1 last week, don't rebuke an older man, but exhort him like a father. Again, this is an honorable way to correct someone. To treat someone like a leader in your church if you lived in Ephesus at the time.

Or today even, right? How we would treat, I don't know, Pastor Albert or Pastor Andrew and so on. Honor and shame. And so, that's how we start this section, right?

[12:08] We want to respect older men, older women, right? Treat them well. And yet, what if instead of respectable older men, your church or ministry had not-so-respectable ones?

Not-so-respectable leaders. What if in the church, and this is not theoretical, what if in the church there was a famous evangelist who was secretly abusing members under his spiritual authority?

What if there was a trusted leader of a church who was secretly siphoning funds from the church for his own purposes or her own purposes? What if there was a leader that knew there was sexual abuse going on in the organization, but just turned a blind eye?

What does God-honoring leadership look like in these difficult situations? We're going to have a look, right? So, our passage, I think we can break up into three instructions.

And so, in these contexts, right? First, Paul says to Timothy, Honor elders who lead beautifully.

Honor elders who lead beautifully, right? The elders, verse 17, who direct the affairs of the church well, are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.

[13:28] Here, in verse 17, we've turned from honoring kind of the worthy widows, we heard from last week, those who are in genuine need to focus on the older men of the church, right?

The older leaders. Who are they? The word here in the Greek is presbyteroi, was where we get the kind of funny word presbyterian from. That's why they have a lot of elders in their church.

Paul uses a different Greek word to what we heard in chapter 3 about overseers and deacons. But then, actually, in another letter to Titus, he uses the words overseers and elders kind of interchangeably, right?

And so, perhaps, in the first century context, Paul here has in mind not kind of the church structures of PCBC of today, but rather certain older guys who were the senior leaders in their church.

It sounds like some of them, verse 17, their work was mainly preaching and teaching. They labored in it. But, of course, all these leaders were serving in the gospel in some way, right?

[14:36] And they serve, remember, alongside some of the worthy widows that we heard last week. And the older women, right? There, the word is presbyterai, like, you know, worthy women.

I mean, older women teaching the younger women as well. So, everyone is involved in gospel ministry. Paul here is not trying to define, you know, like a structure of a church formally, I think. He's just trying to urge Timothy to honor those older men among his church who rule well or who lead beautifully, right? What does he say? He commands it, right? Let them be worthy of double honor.

Earlier today, we had a very honoring elderly lunch. And lots of elderly people were honored. But here, something different is going on, right? And notice, the gospel subverts culture.

Not every single older person gets honored by default, according to Paul. Just the good elders, those who lead well. Just the worthy widows, not the ones that waste their time or get into mischief. [15:44] And notice, too, Paul here makes his case directly from Scripture. Did you see that? What does the Scripture say? Verse 18. That's how we make a case, don't we? What does the Scripture say?

What should we do in life? What does the Scripture say? All right? And here, Paul perhaps is actually quoting not just from Deuteronomy 25, verse 4, which is obviously Scripture for them, right? About the ox, right? About the ox treading the grain. But when he quotes the worker deserves wages, who said that? It was actually the Lord Jesus.

You can read it in Luke 10, verse 7. Imagine that. Jesus' words, in Paul's time here, already considered Scripture. Right? Right? And both these quotations combine, it's kind of an appeal to animal logic here.

Right? Who owns a pit? Or who has a pit? Okay? You really look after your pit, don't you? Right? If they need a bath, you give them a bath. If they need snacks and treats, you look after them and give them snacks and treats.

[16:48] So, pay your pastors. Reimburse your leaders. Shame on us if our pets get better treatment, if our animals get better treatment, than teachers and preachers who maybe they're not affording their mortgages.

Or they have to move out of Auckland to make ends meet, guarding the gospel. And notice, it's not the leaders themselves that go out and say, honor me, honor me.

That doesn't work, right? That's not very honoring, right? But in an honor-shame world, it's up to other people to pay attention and to speak up for them, stand up for them.

Right? So, Paul wants Tim, the young guy, to stand up for these leaders who rule well. In the same way, PCBC, it's up to us to notice. Right?

Who are the ones that are working, serving faithfully here? How do we honor them and reward them and care for them? Because maybe sometimes, the business world is honoring people's efforts better than our churches do.

[17:52] Do you feel that way? I mean, I think of one hardworking brother in the ministry, I know, would love to serve full-time, but can't. Because, for some reason, you know, there's two sides to the story, the church has not given that person what they need.

And how averagely do we sometimes treat youth leaders or youth pastors sometimes, right? When actually their service has so much impact for the next generation.

So, can I say, for those of you, for those of us, or those leaders out there who are the first to unlock the door, and the last to leave, for those among you here who have chewed on difficult passages and questions, and to teach the teens or teach young people among you, for those of you who just lead like the Lord Jesus, quietly, bringing beauty and flourishing, we want to honor you well.

May we, let us, honor you well. But just as Paul says to Timothy, honor elders who serve well, he also, on the flip side, verse 19 onwards, says, shame elders who don't, leaders who don't, right?

Just like there's a danger of unworthy widows being honored, mistakenly, right? You know, putting them on the widow's roll, and supporting them financially when they're actually just going and being busy bodies. That's what we heard last week.

[19:22] When it comes to the church office and leadership, sometimes, we might be honoring the wrong kinds of people. There are times when people join a leadership team with selfish agendas, or ungodly motives.

Maybe they just want their CVs to look good, or others to say they look good. So, notice again, verse 19, how carefully Paul calls Timothy to tread here in this territory, right?

Okay. So, for elders that don't lead well, you want to shame them, but be careful. Don't entertain an accusation against an elder unless it's brought by two or three witnesses, right?

If some kind of accusation against a leader would have no legal standing, right? Wouldn't stand up in court, for example, don't even listen to it. If there's a concern, it needs to be credible, genuine.

It needs to be something that, yeah, people can see this is a problem in this leader. Paul is not

going to sanction some kind of free-for-all where you just accuse each other all day long. But verse 20, for those who do sin, and I think here he's still referring to these elders, these allegations

against them need to be taken seriously.

[ 20 : 39 ] In fact, even brought before everyone publicly, that's an honor-shame thing, right? Don't just deal with it and say, the police have dealt with it. Actually bring it out to the light when it truly is a concern.

Why? So that the rest, the others may take warning. I take this to mean that the other leaders as well, right? Will treat their leadership roles seriously.

There are lots of bad ways to do this kind of thing, right? Paul doesn't say to Timothy, just hang that person out to dry, okay? And show them no grace.

No. He doesn't say, oh, wow, we got cheated by that person. We need to fight to get back what we lost. No. Rather, there's just a general principle here, right?

If there's real, unconfessed, unrepentant sin in any spiritual leader, it needs to be brought to light and publicly noted.

[ 21 : 38 ] If it grieves God publicly, it needs to be shamed, not honored. It needs to be dealt with, not hidden, so that others may take warning.

I don't know what happens in companies and secular organizations, but the Bible's approach here is totally opposite, I think, to how we might deal with a leadership problem.

Right? Where in our culture, we might sign non-disclosure agreements, or we might just say, oh, if someone, you know, makes a big mistake, falls into a big error, people will start talking about them getting therapy and just getting rehabilitation of their image.

Or maybe people will just not even mention, you know, if a leader's in trouble. And everyone just closes ranks, won't even talk about it. Kind of protecting the family, as it were. The Bible doesn't want us to do that, does it?

In fact, what we read here lines up with what our Lord Jesus has taught elsewhere. Right? Matthew 18. An unrepentant sinner could be a leader as well. Right? If there's a strangling of a relationship because someone is not confessing their sin, go up to them one-on-one.

[ 22 : 50 ] Point them out. Right? What's going wrong in their life? And I'm grateful even for people who have done that with me. And if after repeated efforts that brother or sister is just blind to their faults or unwilling to even hear it, then you escalate it until maybe one day the church has to hear it.

And yes, it brings shame, but there is greater danger in dishonoring God when we leave a concern unnoticed, unresolved, just swept under the carpet.

People are sinful. Right? We all are. Ministry is messy. And so you and I, we're not going to learn how to honor and shame leaders wisely just from reading a book or from watching YouTube tutorials.

Right? When we're called to guard the gospel like Timothy here, to learn the how and why of ministry and leadership, we have to listen to our mentors, to trusted people.

Timothy had Paul. But we all need to look out for older, wiser leaders. And I think especially in a group like us, right, younger, capable, full of really gifted people, I think sometimes our sin or our temptation is we think we can go it alone.

[ 24 : 08 ] Right? Or we think we'll pick the leaders we want or the mentors we want. Or maybe we'll just say, I don't need anyone to help me. I think I've got it under control. But as I could paraphrase Liesel von Trapp, right, and this is a paraphrase, you need someone older and wiser.

Guiding you on what to do. Praying for you. Honoring you. And maybe shaming you. If Timothy need someone, maybe we do too.

I'm really thankful, right? I've been in gospel ministry, vocational, for a couple of years now. I have a long way to go. And so I'm so thankful for experienced ministry workers, right?

Photo on the left, bunch of pastors, right, and gospel workers, men and women, and love hearing their wisdom from their, you know, greater number of years of ministry.

We give each other feedback on what we've been teaching and listening to. I'm also thankful, second picture, of sisters who have been on the mission field. Some of you have met Tsumai, right, has been through here, taught us about, you know, planting songs for the gospel in an unreached people group.

[ 25 : 26 ] She's so generous when she shares her decades of cross-cultural leadership experience. On the right, that's, his name's Paul Davison. I'm blessed by another Paul.

I've got a Paul that's mentoring me in a sense, right? Doesn't just give me kind of official Baptist supervision as an older Baptist pastor. He does it for several others, young pastors as well.

The Lord knows how many curly questions he has confidentially listened to and just guided me through. And like a wise mentor fielding Timothy's curly questions, what we see in the rest of our passage is kind of like what Paul does with me, right?

Just answering all kinds of leadership questions. And so we need that, right? We honor elders who lead beautifully. We shame those who don't as a church. But lean into your mentors so that you can discern together during battle.

And so the rest, verse 21 through to verse 25, kind of look like some miscellaneous proverbs or kind of life lessons, but they're all woven together, right? This is an older man teaching a younger leader how to discern in the battle as it were.

[ 26 : 38 ] That's how I think these verses relate, not just to me as a leader, but I think to all of us as Christians. Remember, what's the main reason Paul writes this letter? He wants the gospel, the mission, and Ephesus to stay on track, doesn't he?

All right? That's why, verse 21, he goes back to the main point. God, keep these things, right? The word and teaching about God, our Savior, in his very presence. Worth camping on that verse for a little bit.

No matter where you believe or what you believe. In a world where everyone is trying to grab your attention, okay? Eyes on me, right, says the influencer as they post another reel. In a world where we are participating in this, right?

we perform to our social media followers. We're trying to impress those who are listening to our echo chambers. Paul talks differently. Verse 21, keep watch.

Guard the gospel. It's the only message that matters. And before the only audience that matters, God himself. Do you live your life as if you have one audience, God?

[ 27 : 44 ] God? Oh, you should because only his approval, only his pleasure matters. Why? Because of the gospel, because of Jesus.

Only Christ took our shame, so we honor his name. That's the good news, isn't it? On the cross, only Christ took our shame, so now we honor his name.

We live for him and him alone. He is our number one audience. And this helps us so much. Once we get the gospel right, all of these bits of advice fall into place, right?

Because in leadership, there's going to be lots of times when you and I, we're going to be tempted to hear a story and we're going to take sides really quickly or judge quickly. So don't be biased, verse 21.

Guard the gospel. That's the main thing that matters, without prejudice or partiality. In ministry, there might be times where you'll be pressured to just organize an event or just to fill up a roster, to rush a decision, or maybe even to voluncele a leader.

[ 28 : 52 ] We need you on the board or on the committee. Don't be hasty, verse 22. All right? Slow down. In fact, verse 22 should sober us, right?

Make a bad decision in leadership. We're actually responsible if that leader later on falls flat, commits something serious. Don't be hasty on the laying on of hands.

And so don't share in the sins of others. And if we stay on this theme of discerning through the eyes of the gospel, then I think verse 23 then makes a bit more sense, right?

Some of you are like, oh, does this saying we can go on a PCBC pub crawl, drink a little bit of alcohol or something? Well, firstly, it says, because of your stomach, so it must be health-related and frequent illnesses.

Poor Timothy, we heard last week, a bit timid, a little bit sickly. But it's more than just anti-water advice here, okay? What was the last time we heard about food and drink in this letter?

[ 29 : 54 ] Do you remember? Chapter 4, verse 3, right? False teachers forbidding certain foods and saying that's what makes you right with God, right? No harm going on a diet or eating healthy, right?

Don't get me wrong. But there were some teachers saying, you know, if you eat this, shame on you. But Paul was saying, hey, Timothy, right? Don't be scared about what others think.

Do drink a little wine because you're sick and that water's not good for you. Do you get it? Paul's actually just giving them good advice. Look after your body, right? And leadership, you're going to get run out and run down.

Look after your body. Otherwise, if you're scared of what others think about you, that's no good. that fear of other people, it's making you sick. Honor Jesus. Don't worry about what they think.

Can you see the themes, right? Bias, hurry, fearing what others think about you. These can all just kind of push us from being God-honoring leaders in the long run.

[ 30 : 56 ] And when you're serving in the trenches like Timothy, you're kind of just, oh, what am I doing this week at church? Oh, okay, what am I doing this week? It can be really hard to really feel out these things, right? To discern these things.

That's why this is such a breath of fresh air. Getting advice from older mentors, cheerleaders, reminding you where you've come from, don't be discouraged, and then pointing out for you, what do you need to focus on next?

God's love. Because, again, reminding you, Jesus is the one you ultimately serve. Again, if Jesus is who you and I stand before, then I don't have to find my worth, you don't have to find your worth based on how many people like you or serving or appreciate your ministry.

If God is the judge of all the earth, then we don't have to envy bad leaders. We don't have to be disappointed or furious at them, sitting in their powerful places with comfortable lifestyles, getting away with evil, because God knows, and he promises, right, verse 24, 25, everything good and bad will come to light, right?

That's what verse 24 and 25 remind us. Some sins are obvious, that people get judged quickly and publicly in this life. Some other things, they might just have to wait till Jesus comes back, right?

[ 32 : 18 ] And then even those good things will be obvious, even those bad things will never be hidden forever. So leave it to the Lord to judge. Leave it to the Lord to judge.

Look at the leaders around the Lord Jesus. You think about that. It was actually obvious, right, straight away when the Pharisees rejected Jesus. yep, Pharisees, not so nice leaders.

But it was only later, much later, that people realized that Judas, sitting amongst the disciples, was a traitor. all be clear on the final day, both good and bad.

In the meantime, Paul tells Timothy, guard the gospel. Look for, seek out godly leaders, and then honor them. And so, before I finish, I just want to share, and just by way of example, who have been some of my mentors, right, discerning hard questions together.

Because I want you to, afterwards, think about it for yourself. Who have been your mentors in the Christian life? Who are the ones that are worthy of double honor in your life?

[ 33 : 25 ] This is Pastor John Humphrey, one of my heroes. Starting for our first Sunday at his church 20 years ago, yes, I am old, halfway through the book of Ephesians, that's when we visited his church, still my favorite letter.

I learned from Pastor John how to throw an American football, how to really enjoy eating broccoli and raisins, and apparently that's a really nice salad.

I also learned from him how to just enjoy walking through the word, section by section, with truth and love. Pastor John, he actually baptized me as a Christian, a very baby Christian, with his wife, Mihion, in the center.

They both helped me to trace God's hidden hand. when I was in my second year of uni, my mom died suddenly and never saw her again. John, he wasn't afraid to walk me through that grief.

He also wasn't afraid to rebuke me when I was immature in what I said and did, and when I was very impatient in the very tearful work of planting a church.

[ 34 : 31 ] His church, Grace Baptist Church, no longer meets today, but John's passion for the gospel, hopefully, as you can tell, still echoes in me today. This is Pastor Richard.

Some of you have met him and his wife, Donelda. Actually, I learned from him how powerful just old-fashioned visitation and prayer ministry was.

Actually, for two years while we were in the same church, Howard Baptist, he was very gracious. He just let me follow him around as a ministry assistant, translated as we just ate pies and drank coffee and asked him lots of questions about life.

Sherwin and I, I think, were still so grateful that he led the church to encourage us to go get training for ministry. I'm even more encouraged that he keeps faithfully caring for his wife, Donelda.

She's kind of sitting in the wheelchair. Some of you have met her. She has Lou Gehrig's disease, a motor neurone disease. And I'm so thankful that Richard, Pastor Richard, reminds me with his life that the sermon can wait when brothers and sisters need care.

[ 35 : 44 ] And of course, there's Moksi, Pastor Albert, right? Pastor Albert first met me, by the way, as a very troublemaking 17-year-old who was causing cross-cultural havoc at a certain Cantonese speaking church family.

And then our paths kind of separated. We're into different churches to each other. But over 20 years later, I look back and I've said this to Moksi before.

I'm just amazed, Pastor Albert, that you're so faithful to your calling here at PCBC, right? It's not an easy thing to stay in one spot for five years, ten years, let alone 20 years.

And 23 years on, he's still faithful to his calling here, right? He's prayerful, some of you know this, he's so prayerful, he's very patient, very quick to own up to mistakes, he's a great listener, even though he's got hearing aids now, he still listens more than I do sometimes, and look to serve together as such an honour.

And of course, there are far more people I could and should give thanks for, but perhaps you have someone in mind, right? You have someone in mind, maybe a link in the chain for your life. I really want to challenge you, think about who that person is, who those people are.

[ 37 : 03 ] Why not send them a note tonight? Why not schedule a coffee with them? Yes, you may not have met them for a couple of years, but do it anyways, right? And have the courage to say to them, sister, thank you for leading me to love Jesus more.

Brother, you've been a great example in Christ to me. Thank you so much. I think that's how church should be, right? Honor those who lead beautifully. Rebuke those who don't.

Guard the gospel's word and teaching before the presence of God and Jesus Christ. Let's pray.

Father, we thank you, Lord, that we have the privilege of being your children.

When we think about the leaders that have shaped our lives, we're so grateful that so many of them follow after Jesus Christ, the greatest servant leader.

And we want to pray and ask that in him alone, we would keep having our hope found and fixed on. We thank you, Lord. We pray all these things in Christ alone.

[ 38 : 13 ] Amen.