
Thursday, January 26, 2023 • Read 1 Timothy 5:5–10

Questions from the Scripture text: What woman is v5 talking about? In what condition has she been left (v5, i.e. without children or grandchildren, cf. v4)? What is her security? What is her occupation? When does she do this supplicating and praying? What does v6 call the life of a widow who does something else? What condition is she in? What is the church to do with this teaching (v7a)? With what desired result for widows and families (v7b)? For whom is one to provide (v8)? Especially which ones? If he doesn't, then what does he deny? What condition does this put him in? What widows mustn't be put on the list (v9a)? For those over 60, what must they have done (v9–10)? Which good works in specific? Which others?

How does one who has “learned to show piety at home” show that piety when she becomes a widow? 1 Timothy 5:5–10 looks forward to the second reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these six verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **a true widow is left only with God, but has learned a fellowship with Him that gives her more than enough to do with her time/life.**

Piety begins at home for the minister (or congregant) who wishes to speak respectfully in the congregation (v1). Piety begins at home for children and grandchildren whom God gives the opportunity to repay their parents (v4). And piety begins (v5) and stays (cf. v13) at home for true widows.

Whom do they have left at home? If they're a true widow(?)... none. She who is really a widow has been left alone. But not entirely alone. She hopes (better translation than “trusts”) in God. She's content with Him; she isn't hoping for more than Him. So, she doesn't need more to have.

She also doesn't need more to do. She might not have a husband to obey and serve (v9b, cf. 14a, Tit 2:4a). She might not have children to love and rear (cf. v14b, Tit 2:4b). She might no longer be equipped to take strangers in to lodge them, particularly road-weary saints whose feet to wash (v10, Tit 2:5a). But she still has One upon Whom to attend. And she loves to make every sort of prayer (summarized under the pair “supplications and prayers”) at every sort of time (summarized under the pair “night and day”), v5.

This life of piety finds its pleasure not in indulging itself but in God. There are those who would rather indulge themselves than take the God-given opportunity to provide for their own, and especially of their own household. This living unto self is denounced by v8 as “denying the faith and worse than an unbelievers.” And there are those who would rather indulge themselves than live night and day in supplications and prayers. This living unto self is denounced by v6 as being “dead while she lives.”

The apostle's concern is that the minister's and church's concern would be the spiritual well-being of all. That they would all learn to have their hope in God, that they would all learn to live unto Him instead of unto self (cf. Ps 78:7, Tit 2:5b). “Command and teach these things that they may be blameless” (v7, cf. Ps 78:5–6). The church is not to help children/grandchildren deny the faith, nor is it to help widows who don't care to live a life of prayer end up with too much time on their hands and live in a dead way.

It takes years of maturing through a life in which there is little time for much else but service to get her to this point. In fact, even in a congregation where this kind of godliness for younger women and wives is practiced, the assumption is that it will still take those decades to mature her to the spiritual place of v5. The apostle flatly says not to enroll any woman who is under 60 (v9a).

Indeed, being put on the list would be a crown of dignity, attesting the Lord's gracious work in her and through her over the course of a lifetime. And what an opportunity that then becomes for the church that has the privilege of providing a dignified life for such a royal lady in Israel. For wives and mothers (and single ladies who are commanded to seek marriage and children, cf. v14), it is much-needed to have such royal older ladies in the church, who are godly examples (cf. Tit. 2:3) unto the admonishment of the younger (cf. Tit. 2:4). May these much-needed ladies be accordingly treasured and cared for by their churches!

What older ladies do you know who live in the contentment and service described in this passage? How are they being taken care of? How are you (or the younger ladies in your life) living a sort of life that makes progress toward that level of maturity by the age of 60? Who has been assigned to you in your life? What do your roles/relations to them require of you? How are you fulfilling them as a life-mission of service unto God?

Sample prayer: Lord, thank You for putting us in our places and relations so that we may practice our piety first at home. Forgive us for begrudging our service to them. For doing that service half-heartedly and half-way. Truly, we know constantly the tendency toward denying the faith and being worse than unbelievers. Forgive us for how we are not contented with You. In truth, very few of us can endure in prayer for an hour, let alone night and day. How close we come to living for pleasure, how close to being dead even while we live! But You have not only atoned for us in Christ, but You work in us by Your Spirit over the course of our lives to work in us that contentment and love and service. Continue and complete that work in us we pray, through Christ, AMEN!

ARP128 “How Blessed Are All Who Fear the Lord” or TPH128B “Blest the Man That Feels Jehovah”

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First Timothy 5 verses 5 through 10. These are god's words. Now, she who is really a widow and left alone Trusts in god. And continues in supplications and prayers. Night and day. But she who lives in pleasure. This dead while she lives. And these things command, that they may be blameless.

But if anyone does not provide for his own and especially for those of his household, He has denied the faith. And does worse than an unbeliever. Do not let a widow under 60 years old. Be taken into the number. And not unless she has been the wife of one man.

While reported for good works. If she has brought up children, If she has lodged strangers. If she has washed the saint's feet, If she is relieved, the afflicted. If she has diligently followed, Every. Good. Work. So far the reading of god's inspired and Inherent word. The widow who is really a widow here.

Is the subject we started thinking about that in verses 3 and 4. Last week and those who are really widows are as verse 5 summer sums up that part of it. Um, in our passage for this week. Uh, she has been left alone. It's not just that she doesn't have husband anymore.

Uh, but she doesn't have children or grandchildren. And the context is one in which we have learned to live in a godly way, live in a way that recognizes that we have been created to know god. And to make him known to serve him. And to do good. To others as he does good to us.

And so that has come out in the speech. Of the Of the minister as an example, to the congregation versus one and two. Uh, we show piety first at home. Uh, in imaging, god and serving him and doing good to others in. However, we talk whether to brother or sister Or mother or father.

And having learned that life of serving and living unto God, even in the way that we talk in our homes, then he can come. Then he comes, and he gives us the instruction live like that in a congregation too. Having practiced your piety, first at home, having practiced godliness first at home, practice it.

Then in the congregation. Well, this is also applied to the children and the grandchildren if she has children and grandchildren god has giving them opportunity to to continue obeying, the fifth commandment to honor their mother, to repay both of their parents to repay their mother upon whom Uh, upon Whose care now rests upon them and even to repay their father Who in the days of his time in this world had loved his wife as his own flesh, as his own body, and had taken care of her and provided for her.

And now he has gone and perhaps he has not left her with With what can care for her exact that he has left her with children. Uh, whom he has given the discipline of the lord and the instruction of the lord, and part of that discipline and instruction was that they would honor their mother.

And so if she has children and grandchildren she has not been laughed alone. There are those now who have come. Uh, from her husband, there are those who have their opportunity to practice Their priority first at home and repay their parents for, it is good and acceptable before the lord.

Children obey your parents in the lord for this is right? This is good. This is acceptable. God has put it In his law. Well, it doesn't surprise us then that the one who is really a widow is not only the one who has been left alone as we heard in last week's portion and versus three and four.

Uh, but the one who has come Into a season of life, in which she first shows her piety at home. And you say what home? She has no children. She has no grandchildren. She is as verse 5 left verse 5 says left alone. But there's something marvelous that happens.

When in your ministry, to your husband, you're not just ministering through your husband, your ministering, to your husband, unto the glory of your god, you're submitting to your own husband as unto the lord out of love. Not just for your earthly husband. But for the groom of the church for the one who made you and redeemed you with his own blood and has counted you precious and over the years up until she's 60.

And if she isn't 60 yet, Then she hasn't had enough training in loving and serving. The lord this way. And so, she is to be trained as she as she makes the meals. And does, she attends to the home? And as she rears the children, and as she and as she plots and plans, All of her domestic life to be as efficient as possible.

Not so that she can go hang out with her friends for coffee. But that she would even be able to be hospitable to strangers and to wash sink's feet and have more time for charitable works. And the whole time, she's doing this, she's doing it unto God. And as she does it unto God, she does it as, as a sinner saved by grace and dependent upon grace, she has peace with god through the lord, jesus christ through whom also, she has access by faith into this grace and which she stands.

And so, her heart is always going up to god for strength, not to grow weary and well, doing for patients with these children, who try her patients for meekness with her husband, who sometimes is right. And sometimes is wrong and she's often found out that when she thought she was right.

She was wrong, but she's all other times been, right? He was wrong. And yet he's the head. And so she has meekness under him trusting in christ and she's constantly lifting up her heart to God. Praying for herself, praying for her children, praying for her husband, praying for these strangers, that she's going to lodge praying for the other people in, in the church that she's doing good works to And as she lives this life of self-lessness self-forgetfulness.

Pouring herself out unto God in the good works that she does for everyone. She she is doing it only and especially by prayer. And by the word of god, putting on that full armor. For the spiritual war. That ephesians 6 describes in order that we might do well in our domestic lives as a wife, or as a husband, or as a child, or as a father, or as a master, or as a slave.

And so the gospel of god and the righteousness of jesus christ. And the, the the The truth of god and the gospel. I already said, gospel the helmet of salvation, and all of these things but we wield them all. How does he say? All in prayer, all prayer, being the thing that holds all everything together.

This is the life of a christian. The faith that timothy has been commanded to teach and to bring back by this ministry on to reformation in ephesus. Is a faith and a doctrine. That accords with gobliness. And so it is it is lived out in the all day every day, remembering the word of god interacting with god praying.

And now she's alone. But she's not alone, is she She might not have the husband. To serve with their hands, you might not have the children. To serve with a hands. You might not have the resources. Although i think after the church obeys this she will have the resources.

To extend hospitality and large strangers. But she's been trained through a lifetime of lifting up, her heart to god, and having communion with him. Fellowship with him in her service. To never be alone. Because she's always. Living life and fellowship with god, the sort of thing that each of us wish that we could have but even Following what the lord gives in his word to do.

The apostle here says, don't let her be taken into the number until she's 60. Because in god's ordinary providence. That actually takes. Decades of dependence and devotion to god in these other things that are necessary parts of life. And so he forces us into them. Because if we don't do our work, people don't eat.

If the husband, and father doesn't do his work, we're unable to to procure things. If the, if the wife and the mother doesn't do her work, we're unable to prepare things. So just to survive it has to get done. But to get it done well, to get it done christianly.

To get it done onto the lords, to get it done out of love for one another, It takes that dependence upon grace. And that life of the heart with god. And so he says, by the time she's 60, By the time she's 60, she will have had enough training.

And as well here next next week in the younger, women passage If she's not 60 yet. And she hadn't had enough training. She needs to get another husband and other children. And spend more time learning this dependence upon And devotion. To the lord. And so when he's describing a widow here, He's describing someone who's prayers are going to be as to to borrow a phrase from Uh, spurgeon the power plant of the church.

The apparently had a place in the basement of the church building where people would pray during the services, they had multiple services. Um, and if it wasn't your turn to be at worship and you were part of the the group who did that, you'd be praying for the worship while it was taking place.

Asking god to pour out his holy spirit. Asking god to save, and give the new birth. That's what asked him once, what the key was to the to his preaching and he

Um, brought them down to where there were people praying? I don't know, maybe they even prayed when it wasn't worship service and he showed them the people to open the door and let them see the people in the room.

Praying. Said, this is the power plant to the church. Well here. She who is really a widow and left alone. What does she do? She trusts in god and continues and supplications and prayers. Night. And today, She has a ministry, and i say this. Not meaning to diminish but with reverence but so that we may appreciate the sort of ministry that is described here and ministry.

That is analogous to that which the second and third persons of the godhead do for us. Jesus, who always lives to intercede for us? The spirit who helps us with our praying, and who also intercedes for us. Now, this doesn't mean that she doesn't sleep, she's finite, and she's still sinful.

But she's a mature christian. And she's learned fellowship with god. And the prayers of a righteous man are very effective in their working. They avail much. And she is as fruitful and productive after 60 and more. So, perhaps even than before, 60, Because god and conforming her to christ by the fellowship of the spirit has produced the image of his ever interceding son in her And, The apostle is describing here.

Is putting her on the payroll. When? He finishes the honor the widows section that starts in verse 3 at the end of verse 16. He gets in, he gets into the Very next verse is, going to be, let the elders, who rule, well, they can counted worthy of double honor.

Especially those who labor in the word and doctrine for the scripture says you shall not muzzle an ox, while it treads out the grain. There are people whose labor is going to be in the word indoctrinate and whose labor in part is going to be in prayer. That's what he said.

But that's what the apostle said in acts chapter 6, when When there was the the need that arose to administer and oversee and make sure that the distribution was going well and they said we aren't going to give up Our ministry in the means of grace. Overseeing, the spiritual care of the church.

In order to oversee the service of the church and material things, And so the deaconate was formed for that but they said, but we will give ourselves to and the first thing they said was prayer. And to the ministry of the word. Because and pay attention boys, especially because The lord giving you to be a husband or a father, you are going to be ministering the word to your family.

And you will not minister the word to your family rightly if you are not a praying, Husband and a praying father. Who prays for your family and praise over the word. And has fellowship with god in his word. So that you can lead your family. And having fellowship with god and so that you can do.

So independence, upon god, asking him to do his word work in your family's life. There are many people who use the phrase family worship. And they have led many bible readings and many prayings and many singing. But they have not. Led their family in worship.

And so an elder is to be praying, man. And especially those whose labor is in the word indoctrinate, which we might to to To say it in a way that is, Analogous to what we have in our passage who continue in the word and doctrine, laboring in the word and doctrine night and day.

But we know for max chapter 6, a big part of that is prayer. He says if they're doing that, don't muzzle the ox. They're devoting themselves. To the ministry. And the means of grace and they are worthy of a double honor. Well, the widow is worthy. Of honor. Put her on the payroll.

The sort of widow that we have here. In first, Timothy chapter 5. We didn't say, well, that's a bit harsh. What if what if she's not this kind of woman? And he says, verse 6, she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives. And the implication is. Let her find something else to do.

That's fruitful You know, maybe she can Um, You know, whatever else it is. But there's another way of taking care of her. That doesn't give her a ton of free time. Because if she hasn't learned, To love fellowship with god. Then free time, won't be good for her. Who will kill her spiritually?

She will want to do the going and hanging out that younger women still want to do. As we'll hear about in next, week's passage You'll want to. Spend her time in hobbies, or Whatever. So it says she who lives in pleasure, she who indulges herself. She who? Have been harmed by a church culture, like The ones we have in which we talked to children constantly and we say Oh, that was fun.

Or wouldn't this be fun if or that'll be fun or And what have they hear? They, they hear implicitly in the way, we talk with them. I exist to have fun. That's how we measure if something is worth doing. The apostle comes and said that way of thinking about life as death.

And we should not financially. Facilitate. Living that way.

It's interesting, isn't it when Men makes up his own, holy days. And even if he says that they're about the lord, And he might have a service and he might have a devotional and he might have a devotional every day. And yet, how much of those observances and celebrations end up focusing on?

Oh, this is such a fun time of year with all of these fun traditions.

We don't live for fun. And the church is not to harm. To harm. A 60 year old woman who has been left alone, And she's about to. Enter eternity. And with her on the doorstep of eternity, we're going to Increase the amount of free time. She has even though she has not been spiritually matured.

By a lifetime of service. Don't harm her that way. That's what he's saying in verse 6. He's not saying don't put her on the list because she's not good enough and she's not worthy of the money. They saying why? Would you help her physically only to harm her so much spiritually?

And help her to be dead, even while she lives. That may be love and good works and charitable deeds in the eyes of the world. But that's not how christians should be thinking. So, it says these things command that they may be blameless. That they may be different from the world.

That the whole church not just the widows would be blameless. But the whole church working together. In delighting, in god. And depending upon god, and devotion to god, Would be blameless.

And then he repeats the instruction verse 8. That is similar to the instruction of verse 4. If anyone does not provide for his own especially for those of his household, he is denied the faith. And is worse than an unbeliever. Let them show the piety. Now, verse 8, That they have seen their mother and their

grandmother.

So, For their whole life. Versus 9 and 10. And so this, this widow who is At least 60. What has she done between her mid teens or late? Teens, when she got married and the age of 60? There's been my wife of one man. She's been a one woman man.

Devoted to him. Not living for pleasure for herself this dovetails with our lesson in the seventh commandment and the shorter catechism this week. Stop it. That. That the seventh commandment teaches us to find our pleasure in god. And the right fulfillment of all the good. Desires that he has given us in his design.

So that she doesn't find her romantic pleasure, In. The idea of romance and in how it makes her feel and And, But rather in the fact that god has given her a husband, And that the husband. That she has as the one that god has picked for her. And that god is giving her an opportunity to glorify him and the kind of wife that she is.

And as her husband loves her, and shows her that affection and she reciprocates it to him. The romance of it is great because of who god is And it is connected to the person of her husband. That he is her own. And not merely that. Um, That it feels nice to give and receive romantic feelings.

She wouldn't be the kind, who would read. So-called and i'm not even sure there can be such a thing. Christian romance novels. Or allows her mind to wander and float and romantic lalaland. Because it's not attached to the person of her husband. She is a one man woman. The wife of one, man.

Just like the Requirements for an elder or a deacon that they would be a one woman, man. And not allow their, their lusts or their romantic. Feelings. To wonder and be inflamed accept in connection to their wife. What else would she be? Like, she's well reported for good works.

She has brought up children. Oh, how much of her ministry, her whole life? How many hours and days and how much sanctification and grief and all yearning out of the wrinkles? And cleaning out of the spots. From her remaining sinfulness. How much of that is summarized in the phrase if she has brought up children?

And how god sanctifies us through them. If she is lodged strangers, she does good works. For her neighbors. If she has washed the saint's feet, not just her neighbors but especially her brothers and sisters. If she is relieved, the afflicted You see the the circle narrowing? You know, she does good works to all.

She lost a strangers. She washes, the saint's feet. There's a special focus on the the needs of the church and how the church can be served. But then within the church, there are those who go through a season of affliction. The illness are injury or bereavement or the loss of financial means or Whatever it is.

And she's learned to to Not just learned but she's spent a lifetime seeing those as assignments in god's providence. God has given my sister affliction. God has given our brother affliction. God has given this family affliction because he's given us the providential assignment of loving them and helping them in the midst of their affliction.

And then he summarizes the hole after he's done these concentric circles. If she has diligently followed, Every good work. And as she did those things. Independence, upon god. And he, Has trained her heart to have fellowship with him? The apostle says, by the time she's 60, She has been prepared by her service.

To know that god is enough for her. To not feel like she has to be entertained to not feel like she has to be social. All of that has been ironed out washed out. By the sanctifying work of the holy spirit. And she knows what to do with herself.

She doesn't go stir crazy at home. She doesn't feel like she has nothing to do. She still has her god. And she still has his word to her in the scriptures. And she still has his ear. Which after a lifetime of practice decades of practice. She makes good use of having the ear of god.

And continues in supplications night and day. And he says, Put that woman on the payroll. It's not just a charity role. She's continuing, isn't she to serve her neighbors as she prays for her neighbors. She's continuing to serve the same. And she prays for the saints. And she's continuing.

To serve the afflicted. As she prays, especially for the, the saints. Who are in affliction of every kind and now especially Because it's not through the lodging and the meals and the, the whatever medical care can be given. She prays especially for the spiritually afflicted. Those who are carrying carried away by false doctrum, those who are being carried away by their sin, those who are under discouragement and doubt and depression.

Who aren't sure of their faith. There might not even be converted. And she's got this glorious ministry of prayer. Churches need Widows like this. They need the older women who God has providentially assigned to this ministry. And they should be. Glad. To provide them a full income. In order that they may be able to do so.

And perhaps even that they may continue to lodge strangers if they are able Or wash the saint's feet continue to be generous. About how can be, they be generous. If they only have a bear subsistence. So what's being described here? And these six verses is, Much more, much greater.

Uh, i think then What? We are accustomed in the churches today? To thinking about when we talk about, The care of widows, but may the lord. Give you my daughters. A life of loving him and serving him and dependence upon him and devotion to him. That yes, is going to be hard.

Because that's how endurance comes, remember. But that through the training, you learned the whole in, The. The glory of god. And you rejoice in the hope of the glory of god. So that when you come to that season, He will be enough for you. And you may continue serving in a way.

That will be even greater the final act. Will be more powerful and more necessary and more needful. Than the previous acts of your life have been. Let's ask god to help us. Of our father. This way of living with you and living before you, We know that it is the way of from your word.

But it is definitely not the way that is from our hearts from ourselves. When we live in a world and even in A church culture where it is not the way of life. So we pray that you would make us more. And more continually mindful. Of you that you would.

Make us to do every part of our duty every day. Independence upon you in hostility to our sin. Enjoying you and your glory in it and the opportunity to love you. Depending upon your love for us to produce in us. By your grace, the The like-mindedness and to christ.

That you would give us to live and fellowship with your spirit. That you would make us a people whose hearts continually go up to you in prayer. Oh lord. I pray that you would help me to be. The sort of minister that the apostles Said that they needed to be.

Committed themselves to be in that six and pray that you would give. Our sons, the The ministry as husband, who washes his wife and his father who brings her children up in the discipline and instruction of the war. That they would be men of prayer. Pray that you would give.

The daughters, the and give my wife. The same sort of ministry for the bringing up of their children. That they would be women of prayer, and for every duty even now for the duties, they have, as children for the duties, they have as sisters. In the home and sisters of the church.

That they would be thinking about their neighbors nearby and The lost around the world. That their hearts would be. Even now being trained. To know you and to have fellowship with you and to reflect your priorities. From your word. Oh lord, we pray for the churches and for our congregation.

That you would give such reformation of doctrine and life, that the sorts of instructions, that you give here, That the sorts of instructions that you give here would fit And connect. And that you would bring your church into a season of such. Like mindedness and to christ. That it would be ordinary to think of the women who are brought into this season.

As being. The. Part of the power plant. Of the church. Whom you use mightily among us? Granted, we ask in jesus name, Amen.