

Women's Bible Study, December 6, 2024
Lesson 6 (1 Timothy 5)
Holy Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church

Highlights & notes for 1 Timothy 5 -- Responsibilities Toward Others; Ministering in Church Family

1. **Objectives and Introduction of this week's study** (SG p.86, p.30; TPB p.73)

a. Through the Holy Spirit working through God's Word we will:

- 1) Understand what opportunities a Christian has to serve his or her neighbor;
- 2) Desire to be of service to others;
- 3) Learn what God's will is in our treatment of pastors.

b. Just as Paul instructs Timothy to minister to individual sheep of the flock as a loving, concerned caring shepherd (TPB p.73), so also we as followers of Christ are to serve one another. Paul shows clearly that we are not in the world merely for our own sake. God has put us here to live useful lives in the service of our neighbor (SG p.30). Paul gives specific examples of individual needs within the church community in which pastors and the church family are to serve and encourage others.

2. **1 Timothy 5:1-8, Encouraging and caring for others within the church**

a. **vv.1-2, Older men, younger men, older women, younger women**

1) Teaching and correction are not to be done harshly, but with kindness and respect.

2) Encouragement should be extended to fellow believers regardless of age or gender, as if they were members of one's own family. (TLSB 5:1-2) A young pastor (as Timothy was) "should show the honor and respect due according to the Fourth Commandment." (See also Leviticus 19:32: "Rise in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly.") (TPB p.73)

3) **SG #46**, pp.31 & 86-87 -- With brotherly love consider how we are to help a fellow brother or sister in Christ who has fallen into sin. It is important that we do not do so in a superior or condemning manner, but do so with pure motives ("in all purity").

* Galatians 6:1-2 - "Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit [you who are spiritual (EHV, ESV)] should restore that person gently [in a spirit of humility (EHV), in a spirit of gentleness (ESV)]. But [carefully] watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." (NIV)

** James 5:19-20 - "My brothers, if anyone among you wanders away from the truth and someone turns [brings (EHV)] him back, let it be known that the one who turns [brings back (ESV)] a sinner from the error [wandering (ESV)] of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins." (EHV)

b. vv.3-8, (SG #47, pp.31 & 87) -- Widows and others within one's family and church family with specific needs (e.g., elderly) Consider why we should offer sympathy and kindness especially to widows and older people who are left alone and especially our own parents.

1) "The first special group about whom Paul writes are the widows. In the Jerusalem congregation too they were the first group that needed to be served in a special way (Acts 6). If a woman lost her husband, she lost her means of support... It is not surprising that Paul has special words of instruction regarding widows." (TPB p.74)

2) v.3, "*Give proper recognition*" literally means to honor, show respect, offer support. (TPB p.75; TLSB 5:3)

3) v.4, If a widow has children and grandchildren who are able to help her, it is "pleasing to God" for the family to first look after her. The church still has responsibility to provide care for the widow (James 1:27), especially if she has no one to help her. (TPB p.75; TLSB 5:4; SG p.87)

4) v.5, This verse is one that personally resonates with me and other sisters in Christ who are also widows. There is great comfort in God's special care for widows as described throughout Scripture. It is true that a widow's prayers become deeper and are unceasing as she cries out and relies more fully upon the Lord in her need and in the great hope she's been given in the Lord. With true dependence upon the Lord alone, Christian widows remember Anna (in Luke 2:36-38), who "never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying." And Christian widows remember the heart of the poor widow (in Mark 12:41-44, "This poor widow,...out of her poverty, put in everything...").

5) v.6, Instead of turning to God, a widow may seek to satisfy her emotional, social, and perhaps even financial needs by a life of pleasure... thus, killing faith in her heart. The church's responsibility in such a case is to earnestly call her to repentance. (TPB p. 75)

6) vv.7-8, Caring for family members who are in need, elderly, etc, is also addressed.

* "To aid one's parents is every Christian's duty. [Not caring for one's family was considered highly contemptible. Even unbelievers may instinctively care for their family (TPSB 5:8)] The Church must care for those who are left alone and helpless..." (SG #47, p.87)

* Going back to v. 4, the NIV states "...these should learn first of all to *put their religion into practice* by caring for their own family..." The ESV states, "let them first *learn to show godliness* to their own household..." To not do so, according to v.8, would be to deny the faith (and is worse than an unbeliever). Even unbelievers recognize the closeness of family bonds and the responsibilities incumbent on parents and children toward one another..." (TPB p.76) Living forth our faith, in the power and by the fruit of the Spirit, especially within our own household, is a mark of sincere faith. Also, it was considered a mark of Christian faith in the early church, in the family of God. (recall our study of Acts, Acts 2:44-47 and as we mentioned earlier Acts 6:1-7)

3. **1 Timothy 5:9-16**, Specific instructions in organizing help for widows in the church at Ephesus

a. Regarding "*the list of widows*" -- This was perhaps a list of those widows with greatest need that the congregation supported. Or other commentators consider the list to include widows that the congregations chose as "deaconesses" or at least for some kind of similar service. The widows on the list were to have certain qualifications. (TPB pp.77-78)

b. Regarding *younger widows*, they were not added to the list. "Paul counsels them to marry... Another marriage must have been a viable prospect for younger widows. Paul advises them to follow this route..." (TPB pp.78-79)

c. Note: The commentators do not have clear explanations for the specific background or need for these instructions. But those *qualified* widows (see verses 9-15: over 60 years of age, having had one husband, serving of others, reputation) were apparently selected to receive the church's assistance on a permanent basis. (TLSB 5:9-10) And "they may also have been assigned service to the church that older widows with the stated qualifications could capably and best render." (TPB, p.79)

d. In verse 16, Paul again takes up the subject of family support of widows. "Believers should take care of the widows within their own families. This will enable the church to use its resources to provide for those widows who are 'really in need.' " (TPB, p.80)

e. Summary: "Different times and economic and social conditions may change how these principles are put into practice, but the role of caring concern by both family and church does not change. Let believers and the church not become indifferent and close their eyes to those in need." (TPB, p.80)

(Note: I am not including here discussion questions #48 and #49 from the study guide (SG p.32) in these highlights/notes, as I do not think they are necessarily applicable. [Just my opinion and due to time constraints.]

4. 1 Timothy 5:17-20, Elders; Honoring pastors and teachers of God's Word

a. vv.17-18, (SG #50 pp.33 & 88) -- Timothy is to teach the members of the congregations at Ephesus about their responsibilities toward the elders. These verses show how churches are to honor their pastors, to "*double honor*" them (vs. 17).

1) "Double " here indicates that the honor due the elders ("overseers", 3:1-7, pastors) encompasses honor both in the sense of reverence and also in the sense of an honorarium or compensation. (TLSB 5:17)

2) In verse 18, Paul quotes Scripture: Mosaic Law (Deuteronomy 25:4) and our Lord Himself (in Luke 10:7). Note: "The use of this term "*Scripture*" for both an OT and a NT passage shows that by this time portions of the NT (or what ultimately became a part of the NT) were considered to be equal in authority to the OT Scriptures." (CSB 5:18) In quoting these passages, Paul is highlighting that pastors should be properly compensated for their work. (TLSB 5:18; TPB pp.81-82)

* Paul summed it up as follows in 1 Corinthians 9:14, "The Lord has commanded that those who preach the Gospel should receive their living from the Gospel."

3) Recall from our study of 1 Timothy 3 (pp. 5-6 of highlights/notes, Nov. 8):

* 1 Thess. 5:12-13 - "...Respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord... esteem them very highly in love because of their work." (They are to be honored & loved not because of their status but because of their service in the spirit of Christ's teaching. Jesus defined greatness in terms of humble service. God will exalt those who humbly serve for His sake. TLSB 5:13)

** Galatians 6:6 - "One who is taught the Word must share all good things with the one who teaches." (Provide for and pay our pastors well. Care for their families.)

*** Hebrews 13:17 - "Have confidence in your [pastoral] leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over your souls as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you." (Listen and follow the pastor God has given us and invest in his joy.)

b. vv.19-20, (SG #51, pp.33 & 88) -- Honoring our pastors by thinking and speaking well of them and shielding their reputation.

1) Pastors are serving in a public office, and they may "be subject to criticism according to the likes and dislikes" of congregational members or by those outside of the church. (TPB p.83) What should be our response when we hear our pastors unjustly criticized and slandered? (SG #51, p.33)

2) Consider the actual source of false accusations. Paul was very aware from personal experience that the devil seeks to undermine the work and word of the Lord. Gossip and evil reports originate from Satan, and we dare not become the devil's tool in participating in his schemes. What Scripture says...

i) Ephesians 4:29 - "Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear." (ESV)

ii) Prov. 6:16-19 -
"These are six things the Lord hates,
seven things that really disgust Him:
arrogant eyes,
a lying tongue,
hands that shed innocent blood,
a heart that devises wicked plans,
feet that run quickly to do evil,
a false witness who breathes lies,
and a person who spreads conflict
between brothers." (EHV)

iii) Exodus 20:16 - "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."
(ESV)

iv) James 1:26 - "If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless." (ESV)

v) Matthew 12:36 - "I tell you that on the day of judgment people will give account of every careless word they have spoken." (EHV)

3) "Unless these reports are well founded and can be verified by competent witnesses [two or three witnesses], church members should pay no attention to them." (SG p.33). What Scripture says...

* Deuteronomy 19:15 - "A single witness does not have legal standing to convict a person of any guilt or sin in connection with any wrongful action he may have committed. A case is to have standing only on the testimony of two or three witnesses." (EHV)

** Matthew 18:15-16 - "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his sin just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have regained your brother. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along with you, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.'" (EHV)

4) verse 20 -

* "*persist in sin*" - There were those who continued in their sin for which they had been rebuked privately. (TLSB 5:20)

** "*rebuke them in the presence of all*" - Although some sins would preclude an elder from continuing to serve in that office, Paul prescribes a public rebuke to move them to repentance and help them amend their lives. (TLSB 5:20)

*** If witnesses are able to prove the charges, then the elder/pastor is to be reprimanded publicly as a warning to others. Because his work is of a public nature, public rebuke is in order. "Pastors are to be examples to the flock in their faith and lives. When their sin requires public rebuke, let them also be an example in repentance. ...Let them turn to the Lord for forgiveness" (TPB pp.83-84). This then becomes a testimony for others, to realize that we have in Christ Jesus His rich grace and redemption.

5. 1 Timothy 5:21-25, Paul's additional instructions to Timothy

a. v.21, There is no place in the church for partiality or "favoritism" (NIV) ("pre-judging" ESV; "prejudice" EHV)

*This is not only good advice but a solemn charge of the apostle. Pastors and congregational members must not show partiality in decision-making, providing pastoral care, serving others, or in choosing elders or deacons (lay leaders). (TPB, p.85)

b. v.22, Care in choosing church leaders

* *Do not lay on of hands too hastily* -- "Paul is speaking of the ordination of an elder (pastor), which should not be performed until the candidate has had time to prove himself." (CSB 5:22). (This is the blessing we have in our seminaries where our pastors are well trained and have a vicarage year and a final 4th year.)

** *Do not share in the sins of others* -- "Do not ordain a person unworthy of the office of elder [pastor]." (CSB 5:22) Or in the laying on of hands in "conferring a congregational office..." (TPB p.85)

*** *Keep yourself pure* -- "Timothy is not to be hasty in conferring an office on anyone. If he failed to assure himself of the individual's qualifications and Christian conduct, Timothy would show an indifference toward sin. He would share responsibility for the sins committed by the individual while in office and for the damage such conduct might do to the church... What Paul says here has broader application... If a congregation becomes careless in choosing its leaders, responsibility for the misconduct and sins of poorly chosen leaders is shared by the congregation. We are responsible not only for what we ourselves do but for what we condone in others. '*Keep yourself pure*' by not sharing in the sins of others." (TPB p.85)

c. v.23, Personal instruction to take care of himself

*A parenthetical comment in the midst of Paul's instructions concerning elders. Perhaps Timothy's ailments were due to the impurities in the water and Timothy's sensitive stomach. Water in the ancient world was often impure, and Timothy probably had stomach problems and other health concerns from such unclean water. The alcohol may eliminate some of the impurities affecting Timothy. (CSB p.86; TLSB 5:23; TPB p.86)

d. vv.24-25, Be alert to hidden sins as well as to good deeds in the lives of candidates for ordination (CSB 5:24-25). These words are meant to be a caution to Timothy in his appointing leaders. "Paul may still have had in mind what he said about

not laying hands on anyone hastily: ...Timothy must carefully look at what is evident, their sins and their good deeds." The Lord will guide him and help him more clearly to recognize the one or the other. Timothy and also we need to take it slow, so that we can wait on the Lord for discernment. And there may be some things that will remain hidden until the time of the Lord's judgement. (TPB p.87) We trust God to guide us.

Outlining each of these actions helps us as believers to examine ourselves, and to focus on our Savior,... our need for our Savior, ...our eternal love of our Savior. (Personally, as you might have noticed, outlining in Bible study gives me needed understanding & perspective, and needed focus. Such is the case here...)

1) Obvious sins

(These may pride themselves in not being hypocritical about their sin, not trying to hide it. Avoiding hypocrisy, however, does not justify overt sin. [TPB p.86]) ("For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Romans 3:23-24)

2) Sins covered under hypocrisy

(These sins may "trail behind them," but, if not before, then in the Lord's judgement they will be exposed by Him who knows all things. [TPB p.87]) (Luke 12:2 - "There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known." Also, see Matthew 23:27-28; Luke 11:39-42)

3) Obvious good works

("Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:16. Revealing and giving witness of the Lord. No glory for self, but all to the glory of God. [TPB p.87])

4) Not obvious good works, but they can't stay hidden

("Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them." Matthew 6:1. If not before, in the final judgment, the Lord will point to the good works as evidence of faith...Matthew 25:34-40. [TPB p.87])

References:

TPB = "The People's Bible (Commentary): 1,2 Timothy, Titus" 2nd edition, by Armin W. Schuetze. Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, WI. 2000 (2nd ed.). (Originally published 1988)

TLSB = The Lutheran Study Bible, English Standard Version, General editor Rev. Edward A. Engelbrecht. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO. Published 2009.

CSB = Concordia Self-Study Bible, New International Version, General editor Robert G. Hoerber.
Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis MO. 1986.

SG = Study Guide used in our Women's Bible Study (by participants in-person and via Zoom):
"1 and 2 Timothy, Titus: Keeping the Faith" by A.C. Mueller. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO. 2006. (This is part of the Bible study series "God's Word for Today")

Bible translations used:

EHV = Evangelical Heritage Version

ESV = English Standard Version

NIV = New International Version