

Gospel shaped respect

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[0:00] Maybe when you think of family life, you think back, thankfully, good memories, happy days. Maybe you think that way, and that's a wonderful thing.

It's a very precious thing to be able to look back and think of happy memories in childhood. And of course not everybody can. You may look back to your upbringing and you might find it a painful thing.

Something that has left scars and issues that take a long time to deal with. Maybe things that you'd like to forget or you'd have to deal with how to cope with memories.

Don't be totally discouraged if that's your situation. Most likely your brothers didn't try and kill you like Joseph's did. But he managed, didn't he?

He, as he grew up, he became a man of God. And hopefully you won't find that if your childhood memories are bad and difficult, that doesn't stop you living a joyful Christian life when you've grown up.

[1:12] And of course we think of current family life. We've had some weddings in our extended family which have been joyful occasions and births, which are again a joyful occasion.

I don't think there are any families that are without hassles and sorrows, whether it's illness or bereavement or, you know, more unfortunate things happening in our wider families.

I mean, this is family life, isn't it, in a fallen world. But family is important. Family is important. And God has made family important.

And the theme this morning is that the gospel church is meant to be like a family. Family. So as we're together, as we're together week by week, as we're together like we were the other day and eating together, we are functioning as a family.

That's what we're going to be thinking about this morning. I want to take it back to God himself. So here's a bit for the boys and girls. So if you'd just like to wake up for a minute and help me with this conundrum. So God being interested in family.

[2:23] Now, we had a little discussion just earlier whether we should put an A or a V. But God is something, something, T-H, something, R, to do with family.

I'll give you another chance for that. So this is something to do with family. He is either A or the, something, something, T-H, something, R.

Right at the back? You were going to say father. What were you going to say? And what were you going to say? What were you going to say? Okay, let's give him a little more. Well done.

Okay. God is a father. Oh, he is the father. He is the original father. And here's another family thing. We've just got one letter here. S, something, N.

So do you want to have a go? Son. What were you going to say? What were you going to say? What were you going to say? What were you going to say at the back? Son. Okay.

[3:21] I think that's right, isn't it? Okay. Well done. So in the very being of God, there is something of family. Father, son. We're to understand the eternal God as being in a relationship, the father, the son, and the Holy Spirit.

And in salvation, in Romans 8, 29, it says, Jesus saved us so that he could be the first among many.

Can you do this one? B, R, something, T, H, something, R, S. The first of many brothers. Brothers. Brothers. Brothers. Brothers. Given up. Yeah. Say brothers as well. Brothers as well.

Okay. Yeah. Well, well done. Yeah. So God himself is family and salvation produces family.

[4:22] The New Testament gospel, the message of good news of Jesus Christ, produces a new family. And just dipping back into the Old Testament, OT meaning Old Testament, NT meaning New Testament.

Old Testament, the Lord has a big interest in family. There's some Psalms that we could read. I perhaps need to unpick them a little bit. But Psalm 127 says, Sons are a heritage from the Lord. They're like arrows. Blessed is, I think it says, blessed is the man who has a quiver full. Do you know what a quiver is, boys and girls? Let's just work out what a quiver is. A quiver. What's, and what I know in this context, what a quiver is. Yeah, I put you off because that was a misleading thing.

Yes. Quiver does mean that. But this is another meaning of the word. A quiver full. Sons are a heritage from the Lord like arrows. Blessed is the man who has a quiver full.

[5:23] So let's, what you said was right. But there's another answer as well. It's to do with arrows. Yeah. Do you know what it is to do with arrows? Arrows. Arrows. Sorry, say that again.

Is it the thing that you pull back? No, it isn't the thing that you pull back. That was a good try though. At the back? I couldn't hear that.

Where you store the arrows. Yes, that's right. It's where you store the arrows. So what this is saying is, yeah. Let's do that. Yes. If you've got a whole load of arrows and a quiver full of arrows.

So it's like a sack full of arrows. That's it. Pardon? Oh, like a golf trolley. Yeah. You put the clubs in. And you put, a bit small, you put the arrows in. Yes. Yeah. So the blessing of family life there. And in Deuteronomy 10, 18, it's said about the Lord, the almighty, sovereign, saving God who sits enthroned between the cherubim, who sits above the circle of the earth so that its inhabitants are like grasshoppers to him.

[6:39] He says he cares about the fatherless and the widow. There's something rather beautiful about the Lord God. That as he looks down, he says, there's somebody fatherless.

I care about this person. Here's a widow who's all alone, hasn't got a husband to look after her. I care about that person. So here is the Old Testament God who defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow.

So the principles in this passage, which I'd like to suggest, is that the gospel of Jesus Christ is a message that saves for eternity and changes everything here and now.

So it changes our relationships, changes the way we relate to people, person to person. It changes our sexual relationships, how we view the opposite sex.

It changes the way we look at biological relationships. All these things are changed, maybe a little bit, maybe massively, if you become a Christian.

[7:42] And so I could just ask this, has he changed everything for you? Because part of our consciousness of growth as a Christian is, actually, I used to think that, but now I realize Christ wants me to think slightly differently, or perhaps a lot differently.

And the process of growing as a Christian is sort of re-evaluating that in lots and lots of ways. Some things that we might think, well, that's obviously the way to do things, and we think a little bit later, actually, Christ wants me to change that.

So I ask that question, are we changing? Has he changed everything? And then a second principle, which I think is most important. The gospel of Jesus Christ does not obliterate, does not wipe out creation or order.

It doesn't say, oh, now you're a Christian, you were a father, but you're not a father anymore, or you were a son, you're not a son anymore. It doesn't obliterate the idea of fathers and sons and mothers and daughters and husbands and wives and relationships that are like that, like employer-employees, a little bit like a father-son relationship.

But the gospel brings that all back into, it sort of recalibrates that and re-establishes creation order in beauty and harmony. And that's a very fundamental thing.

[9:02] The gospel makes us more human, not less human. The gospel is supposed to make us more the people that he wants us to be, more human, more in the image of Christ, not less so.

So how wonderful then to have the privilege of showing God's reality and character in this created world. To think that God is interested in gardening and football and music and going out for walks, seeing the world that he's made.

He's interested in washing up and bedtime stories with kids and having a meal out with your spouse. God is interested in the way grandparents and grandchildren relate to one another. And all of these things, all of these things which are embedded in creation, the way God's made the world for a Christian, all of this can be worship. All of this can be worship.

All of this, we thank God for being able to play football. We offer that to him. We thank God for being able to make sandwiches together. And we eat them to his glory.

[10:18] So that's the second principle of coming back to creation. So let's come to our passage. Family life in Ephesus. And we've got some characters to look at. And I've tried to make them memorable.

And the characters here, you know, I'm slightly guessing as to how they operated. But I think we've got to put something in our heads. And I'm not going to try and say we can match each of these characters, somebody in our church.

But I'm just saying to what degree do we fit these characteristics? So let me introduce them to you. So there's Samuel Sr. He's one of the senior men in the church. And there's Jimmy Jr.

And there's these two older ladies, Joan and Queenie. People don't get called Queenie anymore, do they? But that's Joan and Queenie. And this is Sally Shoes.

They call her that because she works in a shoe shop in Ephesus. So a younger lady. And here is, you wouldn't miss this lady, it's Gloria Glitzy.

[11:21] And these are all characters in the church in Ephesus. And we're going to take a look at what God says, or what Paul's instruction are to each of these in turn.

It does say in verse 7, give the people these instructions. So we're going to look at those instructions. Mostly it's going to be Joan and Queenie and Gloria because Paul seems to want to spend quite a bit of time on this particular group of people in the church.

But let's just be conscious that our context is very different in many ways to the Ephesus context. So we have the welfare state. People get child benefit and housing benefit and all sorts of things, which I'm totally confused by.

But in our social setup, a lot of care is delegated to the state. Now, it wasn't the case in Ephesus. There was no pension. There was no social security. If people were going to be cared for, it had to be other people who did the caring. And so if you had a family but lost your husband, if he was a soldier and went out to war or died, then you had a big problem.

[12:42] Because you couldn't just apply to social security or anything like that. And nowadays, the distribution of wealth seems to be that there is such a thing as the bank of mum and dad, if God has been gracious to mum and dad.

And we're quite often finding that mum and dad will help out the next generation, you know, with, I mean, typically helping with a deposit to buy a house.

So our care system works that way, sort of mum and dad are helping the children. But in this passage, it's saying, don't forget there is a responsibility of children to look after mum and dad. And that's the way this passage is going to be operating. We shouldn't think that our society, our Western societies, are the experts in things like this.

In other societies, families are very close to the older relatives. And it would be a natural thing to look after the older relatives.

[13:52] Whereas the natural default position in our society tends to be you can ask the state to look after your older relatives. And they're sort of out of, I mean, worst case, out of sight, out of mind.

So we shouldn't think that our society is exemplary in this. There's always good things and bad things, aren't there? So this, we have to read this passage through that lens.

It isn't the same as we are here. However, let's look at the specific Ephesus context. And this is the same for us, isn't it? Great is the gospel of our glorious God.

Great is the mystery of godliness. Great is the Savior who appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels.

We have the same gospel, the same Savior, the same Spirit, changing us, molding us in the same way as them. A specific thing that they had was that there were false teachers, non-gospel teachers.

[15:01] And as things were there, I think it's not that what can go wrong will go wrong. I think it already had gone wrong. I think they were already trying, picking up the pieces after people had been teaching a different message to the Christian message that I just described.

And there's one of the false teachers. Stop there in the background. As it was said, using the Old Testament law meaninglessly and distractingly and unhelpfully.

So there's false teaching, and we came across that in chapter 4, verse 3. They forbid people to marry, they order them to abstain from certain foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

So that's already happening. And it's one of the things that's doing is forbidding people to marry. And there's also a particular issue with elders, the church leaders, the people who get an opportunity to speak and influence.

And it also seems there was a problem with some of the women in the church. So in 2, verse 9, we'd already come across this, the way the women were dressing in the assembly and trying to somehow perhaps grab the steering wheel of the church.

[16:24] Okay, that's a bit about the context. So let's come and look at these people. So he says, okay, Samuel Senior, better not call him Sammy because that would be a bit undignified.

He says in chapter 5, verse 1, When you're in the family, Timothy, don't have a go at the older guys. Don't rebuke an older man harshly, but rather encourage him.

The word exhort means encourage. Encourage him as if he were your father. Speak to him respectfully. Encourage him.

Build him up. Motivate him to good things. As if he were your father. Younger men.

Now the word in NIV says treat, but I think the, probably still hanging on to the idea of encouragement. So the younger men, like Jimmy Junior, you want to encourage him as if he's your brother.

[17:29] In Tamil. And the Tamil language is a word which says little brother. And I hear the pastors talking to the younger guys like that.

I can't remember what it is. What's little brother? Thambi. Yes. Thambi. Can you do this? Can you get me a cup of coffee? Thambi. How are you doing? Little brother.

Older women. Treat them as mothers. Encourage them as mothers. So there's Joan and Queenie. So you're like a son. They're like your mother.

And the younger women encourage them as sisters. So there's Sally Shoes with her bag of shoes from the shoe shop. As if she's your little sister.

I don't know what the word for little sister is in Tamil. Is there a word for little sister? Okay. You said it. I'm not going to try. Yeah. And he says, and this should all be done in all purity.

[18:32] Because temptation is always there in human affairs. So here's the outline for Sammy Senior, Jimmy Junior, Joan and Queenie, and Sally Shoes.

Let's look particularly at the, we go in verse 3 now to these older ladies. Their full name is Joan Alone and Queenie Quiverfull.

So let's just think about this word widows. Give proper recognition to those widows who are really widows, he says. Now the word here for widow means to be in need in a feminine form, in a female form.

So it's saying needy ladies. And it, I think has the, well here he's talking about older ladies, isn't he? They're elderly ladies.

Older. You can have younger widows. They're needy probably because they're single. Perhaps their husbands have abandoned them. Their partners have abandoned them. Perhaps they're single parents.

[19:42] But he says, give proper recognition to these people. Verse 3. Give them proper recognition. The church should give proper recognition to these, let's assume, older, perhaps single ladies who in some sense

are in need.

And he says you really need to value these people. You need to give them proper value. You need to give them proper respect.

You need to give them support appropriately and care appropriately. And I think this is quite counter-cultural, isn't it? Because cultures can say older people, just get rid of them.

Put them out where we can't see them. Let them be out of sight, out of mind. But here he says in the church, you need to give proper respect and value and support and care to these dear women. And what might that involve? Well, it almost certainly would have involved money and supplies. So remember in Acts chapter 6 verse 1, there was a dispute over the daily distribution of food to the Hebraic widows and the Greek-speaking widows.

[21:12] So a distribution of food. It seems something that the church organized from its early days. So there's some money and there's some bread. Whoops, I clicked too far.

Go back. So in a very practical way, the churches, this church was caring for these needy ladies who had no other means of support.

And I think that's worth stopping on that, isn't it? That's what the attitude of the church should be to our older people and older ladies in particular. Give proper recognition.

But he does say if they're truly widows or if they're widows indeed. So he seems to qualify this a little bit. So let's take a difference between Joan, whose full name is Joan alone, and Queenie, whose full name is Queenie Quiverful.

Because the difference being Queenie has children and grandchildren, and there they are. They belong to Queenie. And he says in this case, now just be careful here.

[22:26] Because the fact that Queenie has biological family is an important factor. So let's just look at this. She has biological family.

And he says there's something here for the biological family to learn. So in verse 4, if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice.

Now that word covers the idea of godliness. They should be working out real spirituality, real Christian godliness.

They should be working that out by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents. For this is pleasing to God. That's interesting that, isn't it?

If there's biological family, they should learn, that's a sort of discipleship word, they should learn to put godliness into practice by caring for their own family and repaying parents and grandparents.

[23:35] It's interesting the idea of repaying. The idea that the parents and grandparents have had a lifetime of feeding into their children. I mean, they might not have done it very well, but that's their role they had.

And there needs to be a gratitude which goes on and is expressed in later life. And I've got the word first. So, yeah, it's in the translation first of all.

It's an important word. It's a big thing. It's a first thing. First. To put godliness. There's lots of references to godliness in this letter.

Into practice. To repay and re-give to the people who brought you up. And he says this is welcome in the sight of God. I find that rather a lovely thought.

That God is looking at the way we relate to biological family. And is pleased with the respect and the practical love and care that is exercised from one generation to another.

[24:40] I suppose it's there in the Ten Commandments, isn't it? Honor your father and your mother. And he says this is important in biological families.

Welcome in the sight of God. And we stop and think of God's, of this thought here about our biological family. He says when you become a Christian, you don't cut them off.

You know, not having anything to do with them. They're not believers. Because even unbelievers can do this right. With unbelieving family. He says in verse 8, if anyone does not provide for his relatives, especially for his immediate family, he's denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Even unbelievers can do this right. So, the importance of our biological family. They're not to be our God. They're not to control everything.

But there's something here that we need to take on board. Just as an example, I could well imagine a student who becomes a Christian and they say this person is on fire for the Lord.

[25:47] And doing loads and loads of evangelism. But I want to say to this person, have you stopped to ring home, talk to your mum and dad? The importance of biological family.

I don't think I did particularly well with this when I was a student. But here's something to learn. The importance of care for mum and dad. And I'll just ask this question.

Here, the financial provision is not that my mum and dad owe to look after me when I get older. It's that I begin to have a responsibility to look after them.

Now, I know that that is, you know, more or less impossible in some financial situations. But at least let's ask the question. Am I thinking that all my duty is that my mum and dad owe it to me?

Or am I thinking, I actually owe my mum and dad something? Whether they're believers or unbelievers, there is something about the created order here. Least worth asking that question.

[26:52] So, that was Queenie Quiverfull, who has a family. And Paul is going to say, when the church is giving financial support, just bear in mind, her family should be looking after her.

Don't let the church become overburdened. That's a family responsibility. But let's think of Joan alone, because she's in a different situation. So, just think how high a view Paul has of this woman. So, where are we? Verse 5. The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and ask God for help.

And he's going to say something else about this lady or this sort of lady. Verse 9. She's being supported by the church.

She's over 60. She's been faithful to her husband. She's known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble, devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds.

[28:09] This is a picture of Joan alone. It's the same sort of picture that Jesus painted of all the people worshipping in the temple, bunging in loads of money with the trumpets and PR photo opportunities, giving this money to the temple.

And Jesus saw a widow putting in one little coin and he said, right, that is what you should aim for. That's real spirituality.

And Paul here, I think, has the same high view of this woman in this sort of situation. What am I doing here? Yeah, Luke chapter 2, the really exemplary Christian people, or believing people, that met Jesus as a baby.

Anna, the woman who spent all the time in the temple in Luke chapter 2. And I think, I don't want to say the wrong thing here, but God leads us in different avenues of life with different opportunities and different possibilities.

And we're going to be looking at the opportunities, possibilities of married life. But here's single life. And here, Paul, I think the Bible is saying it might not have been the life you'd chosen, but if this is the life that God's given you, there are opportunities here.

[29:44] There are actually opportunities to excel. And here is Joan alone who excels. This sort of woman. She's practically dependent on the Lord, verse 5.

Because of her providence, she's really in need and puts her hope in God. So the providence of this is where she is in life almost forces her to be turning to the Lord and looking to the Lord day by day. So the older lady who said to me when I came here as a 19-year-old or however old I was, young man, lean on the Lord. The more you lean, the more he likes it.

Was a widow. She'd learned that. That's the root that God had used to teach her that lesson which she then taught to me. Verse 5.

She has learned to be a woman of prayer. Verse 5. She continues day and night to pray. So in the providential situation, she has opportunity to pray and perhaps pressure to pray.

[31:01] And she has become a woman of prayer. And I offer this as something we would want to aspire to, wouldn't we? We would, all of us, men or women, want to learn to be men and women of prayer.

And this woman has learned these lessons. And I put the word powerful in there. A powerful woman of prayer. She wouldn't accept this. She said, Joan, you're a prayer warrior.

She'd say, no, I'm not. I do pray though. But I would say in God's estimate, she is, you know, in the army of God, a field commander.

She is a woman of prayer. What a precious thing. And it says in verse 10, and I'm thinking this is still Joan. She is well known for her good deeds. Have you met Joan?

Yeah, I've met Joan. She was down in the laundrette the other day and she was helping somebody bag up their clothes. She's such a nice lady. Everybody knows Joan. She's known for her good deeds.

[32:04] And specifically, she's been faithful to her husband. Verse 9. She has brought up children. Well, they've left home now.

But she brought them up. All those hours she put in, you know, changing nappies, taking them to and fro from football, putting plasters on Grey's knees, wiping up when they'd been sick, all those things sort of staying up with them when they got fever.

She spent her days doing that. That's a good thing. She's known for that. She brought up her children. She's known for hospitality. Why don't you come around and have tea and cake?

I mean, this is Joan. This is Joan to a T. She welcomes people. She's hospitable. And she's helped the church people. She's washed the feet of the saints. I know I could, you know, back that time when somebody needed a lift, she said, oh, I'll give you a lift to church.

Back that time when somebody was ill, she would pop around and see them. She, this is who Joan is. This is what the sort of things she's done. And it says things like she's helped those in trouble.

[33:15] I don't know. Maybe Joan had a, when the children were grown up, she went and worked in an office somewhere and somebody came into the office in tears. And Joan put her arm around this person and said, what's the matter, love?

And she said, oh, I've had a terrible time at home. Let me pray with you. What can I do for you? She helped people in trouble. This was Joan alone. And it says here she devoted herself to all sorts of good deeds.

If there was something good that she could do, she thought, oh, I could do that. Nobody's going to notice. I'll do that. I'll pop around and do that. I'll take five minutes to do that. I'll send that text.

Whatever it is. And she says, this is Joan alone. And what a fantastic woman she is. So I would say she's a Christian superwoman. But she would not accept that.

And I would really be embarrassed to say that to her face. But I know that's who she is. And I guess you do too. And let's give proper respect and proper value to this woman and these types of women.

[34:21] Again, with a character like this, we don't have to identify with every single part of it. We say there are the bits like that that I could learn from.

The bits like that that I would like to be. So I want to call her Saint Joan, actually. She's known for doing good.

At home, that's where God led her. Perhaps she never had a job. Sorry, perhaps she never had a family. Perhaps she had a career. But at work, she was known for doing good.

In the church, she was known for doing good. In, I put the real world, but you know, outside the Christian bubble, she was still the same person doing good.

And what value God attaches to this person. You know, this really is somebody. The Word of God says, you guys should respect her and give her proper respect and proper recognition.

[35:18] And I'm sure the Word of God says that because that's what God does. He really honors this woman the way she's lived by His grace. And I can say, wouldn't you like to be this woman?

I mean, not in every detail, but as this applies to each of us in our own situations. Isn't this a very beautiful picture of somebody who's gone through life and has learned and grown and become this sort of person?

Wouldn't we like to be this? And church, shouldn't we honor and recognize and value and support her? You know, our culture is full of youth, isn't it?

I mean, you want to try and look young. You want to try and stay young. But here is value on age. Here is value on having learned lessons. Here is value on seniority. And church, we should value and support such people, such women, in our prayers, in our speech, in our actions.

[36:26] And if appropriate, with our money. It doesn't quite work the same in our culture, does it, with the welfare state. But here is the respect due to Joan alone.

And they did it by having a list. I don't think we're going to have a list, at least not in the same way. But I think I've got a list of people that I respect like this.

And I'm sure you do too. Right, let's come to one other character. So this is Gloria Glitzy. And she is the younger widow in verse 11.

Now he says there are younger widows. And he says don't put them on a list. So let's just look at this younger widow. I think this is Gloria in verse 6.

The widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. So here is some... I'm afraid this lady's life is not filled with prayer and doing good.

[37:32] It's perhaps filled with the latest cool things, the latest fashions. Maybe she's the one who does her hair with the braided hair and the gold.

And wants to come to church and have everybody look at her. Maybe this is Gloria. Or maybe it's somebody a little bit like Gloria. One of her friends. And he says if that's... It's worth looking though, isn't it?

Yes. Yeah. Here is the exact opposite. Here's somebody who doesn't live for the Lord. But just lives for pleasure.

And he says spiritually that's deadly. Spiritually that's deadly. And I think there is probably a connection with the false teachers.

In 2 Timothy there is... I can't remember which verse it is. 2 Timothy... 2 Timothy 3, 6.

[38:32] The false teachers seem to link up with some of these women. And I think maybe this was Gloria. But whatever he says. Please don't put her on your support list.

Please don't be dishing out to her. Because it will have a very unhappy effect. So don't put her on the support list. And he says of her...

Verse 11. As for younger widows, don't put them on a support list. When their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, they want to marry.

Thus they bring judgment on themselves because they've broken their first pledge. Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going around from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies saying things they ought not to.

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

[39:34] So here's a route away from Christian things and Christian usefulness. Now what does he mean? I don't think it's entirely clear about this breaking their first pledge in verse 12.

Maybe it's this. They go on the list of support and they say, Yeah, put me on the support list because I'm never going to get married. And I'm all alone and I need the support.

And actually I'm not going to get married. And maybe they're deliberately saying, No, you put me on the support list. I'm a holy woman. You're never going to catch me changing nappies or anything like that.

And because I'm a little bit superior to you guys. And I promise I won't get married. And then because human nature is what it is, they say, Actually, I do want to get married.

And then they end up breaking the promise. Maybe that's what it is. A little bit like, as we said before, like Roman Catholic priests who promise to be celibate and then find actually that that's not a sustainable way of life.

[40:43] It leads to all sorts of problems and issues. So maybe that's what's meant by verse 12. Or maybe it is that they so much want to get married that they marry outside the Lord.

They get married to anybody at all costs. And they leave the faith because of that. And that's not unknown, is it? For people who start well as Christians to get tangled up with somebody who isn't a Christian.

And it doesn't always work like this, by God's grace. But it can very much lead people away from Christian faith. And he says, and this ends up with a lifestyle.

If you're going to support them so they've got time on their hands, they're going to be idle. Verse 13, they get into the habit of being idle. And they go around from house to house. And they become gossips and busybodies saying things they ought not to.

I just want to think about this word gossip. There's no excuse for gossip. You know, saying things behind people's backs that you actually ought to say to them. Or complaining about people behind their backs and you ought to be complaining to them.

[41:51] Or giving a bad report of people when you just ought to shut up. But I don't, I'm not totally convinced that that's what this word is. It actually has to do with the word bubble.

You know, empty. And I wonder whether these women are going around spreading the teachings of the false teachers.

And we really don't want that. We don't want one thing to be said from the pulpit at the front. But some of these women going around from house to house saying, No, that's not right.

This is what's really the truth. And sort of undermining the gospel ministry. And he says, they're saying things that they ought not to say. And you've got to not support that.

So what should we say to Gloria? And he'll say, rather than being supported and sponging off the church and going around undermining things, far better if you have productive work, if you're employed doing something useful, rather than being idle.

[43:05] And I guess you could extend that to, you know, maybe they could do non-paid work. But just being idle doesn't help anybody. So what should we say to Gloria? Gloria, well, first of all, the people in charge of the funding are going to say to her, Sorry, Gloria, we're not going to fund you with the handout that we give to some of the older ladies who are really widows.

We're going to decline to do that. And we're going to say, well, Paul's going to say, and Timothy's supposed to pass this in, Look, Gloria, stop being so super spiritual and proud.

You're not a cut above everybody else. You're just the same as the rest of us. And you're just the same as the other women. If you have the opportunity to do the normal things that women do, please do so.

Just do the normal things that women do in humble life. Please do so. And if you have the opportunity to marry, then get married. And if you have the opportunity to have children, have children.

And if you have the opportunity to be a homemaker or actually a home manager, the Greek word links home and despot.

[44:17] It's quite a strong word, isn't it? You can't always carry these over from one language to another. But it is quite a strong idea of managing a home.

It's not a demeaning thing. It shouldn't be thought to be demeaning. It should be thought to be an honorable thing for women to do this. They should be honored for doing this.

And it's a spiritually significant thing. If they do this, end of verse 14, it gives the enemy no opportunity for slander. And it gives a witness to the outside world.

This is what the gospel does. It produces people like this. And to deliberately not go along this route is to follow Satan.

He says this has already happened, verse 15. Some have, in fact, already turned away to follow Satan. So there's a spiritual leverage in the advice that's being given here.

[45:27] To live the sort of life that God has put before you to live. Not everybody has the opportunity to get married. But if you have that opportunity, please don't spiritually turn your nose up at it.

Take that opportunity and be the woman, or indeed the man, that God's called you to be. So here we've just had a quick look at the church family in Ephesus.

With Sammy Senior and Jimmy Junior and Sally Shoes. And St. Joan, as I would like to call her. And Queenie Quiverfull. And Queenie's family and the infamous Gloria Glitzy. And here they all are at church lunch. And I say, isn't it a privilege to belong to God's family? I mean, all sorts of different people. You wouldn't necessarily have chosen these people. But God's put us all together. Different ages, different generations, different backgrounds. And God says, be a family. Because I'm interested in that.

[46:28] And it pleases me the way you do this. And how wonderful to play our particular part, whoever we are. Younger or older. Gloria, do get a grip.

Do get a grip spiritually. And Joan, we want to greet you. We want to value you. What a gem you are. What an asset you are to our church.

And we love you. And may God bless you. Keep on praying for us. Let's stop there. Let's stop there. Let's stop there. Let's stop there.

Thank you.