

1 Timothy 5.3-16 Honour Real Widows

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[0 : 00] The progressive church today, which by the way is a contradiction of terms, but the progressive church today as it's called, views the church more as being a business and runs it accordingly as though it was a business.

And it's run by directors instead of biblical church offices, and it's geared towards catering the desires of customers or geared towards catering the desire of its clients.

And this method is not just something that's not in scripture. It's actually contrary to scripture. To see the church and run the church as though it's a business whose purpose is to cater towards its customers is contrary to scriptures.

And it turns the church into something it's not supposed to be. It turns the church into consumerism instead of obedient and holy worship of the one true living God.

And this is something that's more common than not in today's churches and probably has more of an impact than we realize on evangelical thinking.

[1 : 16] But the word of God doesn't describe the church as being a business or to be run as a business. It does use quite a few metaphors to help us understand what the church is or how the church functions.

Of those many metaphors, a business isn't one of them. Of those metaphors that are used, they are far from it being business or consumerism.

But the church is described, when metaphors are used, the church is described relationally as a family, not as co-workers, but as a family, and functionally as a spiritual temple.

So again, relationally as a family, not as a spiritual temple, not as a business that's geared towards catering the desires of customers.

And when you lose sight of the church's relations and of the church's function, then you lose sight of the church's mission and the church's witness. And this is something that's important. So we're going to, as it were, reestablish that foundation.

[2 : 24] So we understand practically with what the church ought to do of what's behind, what's behind, why and what.

Because when you lose sight of the church's relations and functions, you lose sight of its mission. Its mission is not to cater towards. The church's mission is not to cater towards the desires of its customers.

So our text today is going to be 1 Timothy 5, verses 3 to 16. How about for the fuller context, we'll read verses 1 to 16.

So 1 Timothy 5, 1 to 16. Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters with all purity.

Honor widows who are really widows. But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents.

[3 : 39] For this is good and acceptable before God. 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 is 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 is 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. Well reported for good works.

If she has brought up children. If she has lodged strangers. If she has washed the saints feet. If she has relieved the afflicted. If she has diligently followed every good work.

But refuse the younger widows. For when they have begun to grow wanton against Christ, they desire to marry. Having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith.

[4 : 50] And besides, they learn to be idle. Wandering about from house to house. And not only idle, but also gossips and busybodies. Saying things which they ought not.

Therefore, I desire that the young widows marry. Bear children. Manage the house. Give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. For some have already turned aside after Satan.

If any believing man or woman has widows. Let them relieve them. And do not let the church be burdened. That it may relieve those who are really widows.

Our great God, we thank you again for this day. For this Lord's day. Thank you that you have given us life and breath. And the ability and means to come together and sit under your word. We thank you for your word.

We thank you for your spirit. We pray that you would attend the preaching of your word by your spirit this morning. That you would bless the preaching. I pray, Lord, that you would use me in the proclamation and delivery of your word.

[5 : 50] I pray that you would bless the hearing of the word and illuminate your word by your spirit. We pray that you would forgive us of all of our sins and help us to look to you this morning.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. So we're tackling a larger text today. Verses 3 to 16. But what this section that we'll be looking at.

What it pertains to is that the church is instructed to honor its real widows. And then it goes on and qualifies who they are and who has responsibilities.

So I'll say it again. The church is instructed to honor its real widows and qualifies who they are and who has responsibilities. So divide this larger section to three parts.

The first one is a summary of responsibility. The second one is family responsibility. And the third one is the church responsibility. So we can summarize even these by real need.

[6 : 53] The summary of responsibility is real need. Second is to repay. Family responsibility is to repay. And the third is receive and refuse. So the church's responsibility is to receive and refuse.

So those three divisions are the real need, repay, and receive and refuse. So first of all, the real need. If you'll notice, verse 3 is a summary.

It's a summary that then is qualified with the rest of the verses. So that summary is the summary of responsibility. And it's based on the real need and defines the real need. So it starts off by saying honor.

So when I say honor, when we read honor, you might be having a little bit of deja vu thinking, didn't we hear that word just recently? And indeed, last week, we considered the implications of the fifth commandment, which is to honor your father and mother.

And when honor is used, certainly it has that fifth commandment understanding. And we're progressing from that as well to treat older men as fathers and older women as mothers.

[8 : 02] We're thinking about the fifth commandment of honoring them. And then it goes on to talk about widows. So treat older women as mothers. Fifth commandment, honor your father and mother.

And now widows. So there is a fifth commandment implication, but I'm not going to get into depth of that yet, because that's the next section, the next division. But right now, the responsibility is that honor real widows.

Now, another use, or maybe even a further use of the word honor, is to afford them a maintenance or financial remuneration.

So when it says, give them due honor, it's not suggesting that we have a wall of pictures. And when there's a real widow, we take a picture of her and put her on the wall of widows and give them due honor, because they're now on the wall of widows.

But it's financial remuneration to put them on the distribution. If you recall from Acts 6, when the background of what is now the work of deacons, what need necessitated the setting apart of godly men to relieve the elders from their duty of the ministry of word and prayer, it was the distribution to the widows.

[9 : 22] So the honor, to honor them, means to afford them a maintenance, a financial remuneration, or in other words, ongoing financial support.

And we'll come back to that a bit further. Making a distinction between giving us help where need is, this is concerning the ongoing formal financial support.

So honor, who is to be honored? Those who are really widows. Now this is interesting, isn't it? It doesn't just say widows, but widows who are really widows.

It's kind of setting apart a different or more specific person who is in need here. So those who are really widows, those who are really widows, to flesh out that really, there are requirements and qualifications for those who are really widows.

And to summarize it in two words, it would be need and commitment. Those qualifications and requirements is need and commitment. So first of all, those who are widowed, we understand already that those who are widows is those who have lost their husband.

[10 : 38] But just because somebody has lost their husband doesn't mean that they are in need or that they are committed. And we will flesh that out more.

But what is at the heart of what he's getting at of being widowed is that they are left without provision and without support.

The husband would have provided, the husband has passed away, and the widow is without provision and support and without means of provision and therefore is desolate and in need.

And also commitment to be pious. Look in 5b. In verse 5b, the latter half of verse 5, it says, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day.

This is someone that although has been left a widow and has been left without provision, has been left without support, has been left without a means of putting food on her own table, she still trusts in God.

[11 : 44] And despite her lot, she continues in supplications and prayers night and day. So we have in view here a widow who is pious, who is committed, and who is in need.

That is, who is desolate. Imagine someone who is a widow, and she comes into church, and she's carrying with her her Louis Vuitton crocodile skin handbag, and she's got flashy jewelry and gold hanging all over the place, and she's looking for handouts.

I would say she's not in need. If she's claiming she's not able to put food on the table, I think it's probably not because of a lack of means to do so.

Verse 5, it says, Now she who is really a widow and left alone. It's really narrowing it down here.

Just because she lost her husband doesn't, on its own, mean that this is what is to be remunerated.

What's in view here? Now she who is really a widow and left alone. It says she has no family.

Because she has no family. She has no money. She has no support.

[12 : 58] And she has no food to put on her table. She is really indeed and desolate. Those who are really widows. Now I want to back up and re-examine the purpose of the church, because there's some difficult questions that are probably going to arise as we work through this text, and what the primary purpose of the church is.

So, I'm going to ask a question to get you thinking about it, so that you want to know the answer.

But, is the church supposed to be, and I'm using specific words here, is the church supposed to be indiscriminately giving free handouts?

If you view the church as being a business geared towards consumerism, that is to cater towards the desires of its customers, and those customers being whoever you can convince to come through the doors, then the church is going to see its primary witness as giving free handouts to whoever comes through the doors.

Is that biblical? Is that even good? Is that necessarily helpful to every single person that's looking for a handout? Is the church supposed to be indiscriminately giving free handouts to everyone and anyone who comes with an open hand?

Some churches will make humanitarian relief their priority. They think that their witness to the community is showing their humanitarian relief, and that becomes their priority, so that then, whatever it may be, maybe the community will respect them, or people that will then come there.

[14 : 35] Is that the church's priority? Is that the church's burden? Should the church ever refuse to distribute? So those are two important questions.

Is that the church's burden to give indiscriminately free handouts to everyone who comes with an open hand? Is that the church's burden? And should the church ever refuse to distribute?

So we're going to back up even more a little bit, just to better understand some doctrine, so then we can see the place of our text. But 2 Thessalonians 3, 10-12 says this, For even when we were with

you, we commanded you this, if anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.

For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. Now those who are such, we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.

Now the fourth, we've been examining kind of the moral principles behind some conduct, and even in chapter 1, about the misuse of the law and the right use of the law.

[16:01] So we've been examining the moral principles of the Ten Commandments, which is God's moral law. And the fourth commandment tells us a lot about this foundation we're trying to understand here.

Now the fourth commandment, the first thing we think of is the Sabbath day. And the Sabbath day is an emblem of eternal rest. And the Sabbath day is set apart to be a day of rest.

Where we, there's a distinction that we are resting from our labors. And it's a whole day. It's not just God. God didn't just rest from creation in the morning on the Sabbath day, but the whole day.

The whole day is to be kept holy, which involves, what does it involve? To keep it holy, it involves you shall do no work. So there's a distinction that's made of the Sabbath day, but what we sometimes don't initially think of is the other six days.

The Sabbath commandment isn't just about one day being a day of rest, but about the other six days as well. It says, six days you shall labor and do all your work. The fourth commandment isn't just about resting on, on the Sabbath day.

[17:18] It's also about work ethic on the other day. And the church's distribution is not supposed to enable a neglect of the fourth commandment.

The church's mission isn't to enable those who are violating the fourth commandment to neglect it. Those who are sluggards or those who are slothful or those who refuse to work in order to put food on their table.

The church is not to enable them to neglect the fourth commandment, nor is the church to enable the neglect of the fifth commandment.

So that brings us to our second division. That family is instructed to honor its widows. So our second point is to repay family responsibility.

And as we have looked at the right use of the law and the three uses of the law, there's the civil use that God's moral law written on the heart of man restrains evil in society.

[18:20] The pedagogical use of the law, that God's moral law written on man's heart, it points out our sin and drives us to Christ, showing that we are sinful, that we are in need of salvation. And the third use, if you remember, is the normative use of the law.

That God's moral law written on the hearts of man, the normative use of the law is for those who are Christians who have been called out of the world into Christ's kingdom for a rule, a standard of knowing what holy living is.

And when examining the normative use of the law and right conduct for Christians or for the church, it becomes evident to us how different the church is from the world.

Now all of us who are Christians who have been saved, we were once in the world, we were once walking according to the course of this world and we were quite content to be doing so but by the grace of God, we were dislodged from that course, from the kingdom of darkness, we were uprooted from it, we were transferred out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light, relocated and reoriented towards God with faith and with repentance and being regenerated, transferred and reoriented, the reoriented walk of a Christian becomes evidently different from the world and one example of how the church does not look like the world, how the church does not like the world is that Christians aren't trying to kill their babies and they're not trying to kill their elderly. The days of when this was written, there is some difference now in that if an elderly woman loses her husband, she probably has some financial stability, not necessarily but probably does.

[20:18] When this was written, when a woman's husband died, the inheritance went to the sons and it was the sons' responsibility to ensure that their widowed mother was well taken care of.

So if the sons didn't take care of her, then she would be in great need and in great difficulty because the inheritance went to the sons so she now was without means to provide or to be supported.

The sons neglected their duty with the inheritance. Now look at verse 8. But if anyone does not provide for his own and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse

than an unbeliever.

Now, that's pretty interesting, doesn't it? Isn't it? That it says is worse than an unbeliever. Now the moral law of God, which we see summarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments, but the Ten Commandments isn't the extent of it.

Even though it's you shall not, there's also the positive principle of you shall not murder, but we are to be pro-life, to propagate life, as an example.

[21 : 36] But it says, worse than an unbeliever. Now God's moral law is not just Sinai, but it's from creation, and it's God's moral standards written on man's heart.

So man is made after the image of God and knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, and that means having God's moral law written on our heart. So everybody, whether they're a Christian or not, has some understanding of God's moral law written innately within them.

Now, because of sin, that is corrupted and disoriented, and people don't do what God's moral law says, but there is an awareness and a knowledge of it written innately in everybody, whether they're a Christian or not.

So that means that even the unbeliever understands the moral principle of the fifth commandment to honor your father and mother. And you will see that while you see neglect of it, in some cases, you do see that it is understood even amongst unbelievers that elderly parents are to be honored. So for those who are Christians who have been reoriented and have had God's moral law rewritten on their hearts afresh with the desire to do his will or neglecting it, they're worse off than an unbeliever.

[22 : 50] And then look at verse 16. If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them and do not let the church be burdened that it may relieve those who are really widows.

Responsibility here falls within the family to ensure that their family is taken care of. So if there is family, then family is to repay.

Verse 4 says to repay. It doesn't say pay, but to repay or to pay back. Now, I could be wrong on this, but I'm sure that all of us who are here have at some point in time had a mother.

That we came from a mother. That we at the very least were carried in the womb of a mother. If I'm wrong and you're the exception, you can let me know. But if you have a belly button, then I'm probably not mistaken.

So I think we can move forward as though that's just a given. Is that we at some point have been nourished by a mother. Now because of sin and because of perhaps even tragic situations, sometimes that desired time is cut short of when someone should be nourished by a mother.

[23 : 56] But as a general statement, we can say that we have been nourished and taken care of by our mothers. So if there is family, then family is to repay, to pay back.

And that looks like requital for her care of us. Whether children or even grandchildren. Look at verse 4. But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents.

For this is good and acceptable before God. Now one thing that would be an increased burden on the church is if those who are widowed and they have children and grandchildren who have the inheritance and support their mother or grandmother who is a widow and really in need and they have that support and provision but look for additional handouts through the church, then that would be a burden on the church that should be taken by family.

So if family, then family first is to repay. So family responsibility, family first with widows.

Now, given there will be instances where perhaps the widow's sons are not saved and they've taken the inheritance and run somewhere to squander the inheritance and although she has sons, they are not providing for her and they are outside of the church, then she is desolate and still in need.

[25 : 32] What's in view here are those whom the widows have family, the families in the church, and to correct them in their neglect of the fifth commandment to instruct them, to show them that they are to provide.

So that brings us to our third point. The church is instructed to honor its real widows. So the first part, the real need is a summary of the responsibility.

The second part, to repay is the family's responsibility. The third part now is the church's responsibility. So we've met the requirements of the summary that is, she's a widow, she's a real widow, and she's to be honored.

Family first has the responsibility. Let's say she has no family, nobody to provide for her. Now we come to the church's responsibility. The church's responsibility is to receive and refuse.

And this will probably bring up some hard questions. And the progressive church who sees their model of ecclesiology as being a business to cater towards the customers that come through the door, is probably going to get this wrong.

[26 : 45] So it's important to understand what the church is, what it's called to, and what its priority is to know what it is called to do first. So the first thing is discernment and discretion.

Discernment and discretion is required by the church. So going back to that question, is the church to give out indiscriminatory handouts for nothing?

And I intentionally keep using that word indiscriminatory. Verse 6, But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives.

So like that example of Gloria or Glamour Show with her crocodile skin handbag, she looks like she's living it up on the outside and maybe she's feasting and her life is geared towards pleasure or comfort or ease but internally she's dead.

She might look like she's living it up on the outside but internally she's spiritually dead. But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives. And I skip down to verse 9.

[27 : 53] Do not let a widow under 60 years old be taken into the number. So we see here that discernment and discretion is required for what?

The responsibility of the church is in honoring widows who are really widows. So, a couple of things. Do not let a widow under 60 years old be taken into the number.

The life expectancy would have been shorter then. 60 would have been quite advanced in age and would have meant being near the end of her life. So to be a widow at 60 years old means near the end of life, no longer able to work, unlikely to marry, and unable to bear and rear children who will be able to take care of her.

She's destitute, she's alone, and she is in need. And it says, let not a widow under 60 years old be taken into the number.

What does that mean, the number? It doesn't refer to church membership. It refers to something else. what does that mean to be taken into the number?

[29 : 12] What it means is ongoing distribution. Like in Acts 6.1 where widows received ongoing distribution. But those who meet these qualifications is to be taken into the number of ongoing formal distribution of financial remuneration and support.

it goes on to say, and not unless she has been the wife of one man. And what this means of being the wife of one man is one husband at one time.

It doesn't mean she's only been married once. And we're going to loop back around to that. So, you probably have that question. Put a pin on that. We're going to come back to that one. But not unless she has been the wife of one man.

So two implications of this. First of all, what this is saying is that she's been faithful to her husband. She is faithful. She's not an adulteress. She has not had more than one at one time.

One husband at one time. So what that also means then is that and not unless is that if she is unfaithful, if she is an adulteress, then she's not to be taken into the number.

[30 : 28] So two particular words. First one is receive. The church responsibility to receive.

Those, to receive those who are chosen for distribution because of her service to the church. Verse 10. Speaking of the widows, well reported for good works.

And then examples are given of good works. if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work.

Here's describing somebody who has been committed to the church in piety with her service to the church. So receive those chosen for distribution because of her service to the church.

Now something to point out here is the criteria for good works because we might look out in the world, we might see somebody who's not a Christian, who does not go to a church and perhaps they've funded and run an orphanage for those who don't have parents to take care of them and we might say, well isn't that a good work?

[31 : 39] So the criteria of good works as it's used in scripture, two particular things I want to point out is that the good works that the Bible speaks of is only what is the fruit of justification.

justification. In other words, if somebody's not saved, if somebody's not justified before God, then even if they fund and run an orphanage, that is not going to be good works in the sight of God. It is not going to justify them in the sight of God. Good works, biblical, scriptural good works, that is what is the fruit of justification. Those whom God has regenerated and reoriented produce fruit, and that fruit is good works.

And it's also that which is according to God's word. So if someone or a Christian or a church was to say, I've done a good work of putting a pride flag on the window of my church, that is not according to scripture, that is contrary to scripture, so that's not a good work.

Good works are defined only according to what is in scripture and is the fruit of justification. So moving on from that, with widows, she is a genuine believer, she's tried, tested, and true, she's saved, and she has lived a life of bearing the fruit of salvation.

[33 : 03] So it's kind of the same question, but I'm going to ask it again in a different way. Is the church's mission to be a witness of humanitarian relief? Is that the church's mission?

If you had a church constitution and you put the mission of the church and you could narrow down the primary responsibility of the church into one sentence, would that be humanitarian relief?

Is that the church's witness? Is that what the church is here to be a witness of? Some churches get caught up in making that, making humanitarian relief, their witness to the community.

Now here's the problem. There is no shortage of needs. In our community alone, there's no shortage of needs. In Dryden, or sorry, in Canada, there's no shortage of needs. In the whole world, there's no shortage of the needs.

And if the church was to try to take on the needs of this world, then it would be so overburdened it wouldn't be able to focus on what is its primary responsibility and its primary needs.

[34 : 04] There is no shortage of needs and the church cannot support them all. And the church must use discretion to not neglect its calling.

So if the church was to exhaust its finances with everyone that comes to the door with an open hand or every need that there was out in the world, then what would be neglected is other needs that the church should be supporting.

There are many good, solid missionaries who are advancing the gospel in places where they have not heard the gospel and they need support. There are faithful small churches, church plants that need support.

The church cannot support every need of the whole world, so discernment and discretion is required. First of all, understand what the church's mission is and its primary responsibility.

There are those who are really in need and they need support. So the church's responsibility.

[35 : 13] responsibility. So refuse. The church's responsibility, discernment and discretion, receive and now refuse.

Look at verse 11. You might be thinking hard questions like how can the church refuse somebody that comes with an open hand? Is this biblical? Look at verse 11.

But refuse the younger widows. For when they have begun to grow wanton against Christ, they desire to marry, having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith.

Now this is a difficult section and for time's sake we're not going to dive into everything. There's doctrine here that's covered in much other things. But Paul here is not pitting marriage against faith. He's speaking of young widows who are looking for an easy life and a life of pleasure over a life of piety and service.

[36 : 12] That's what he's doing here. He's not pitting marriage against faith. Not that a desire to be married is contrary to a life of faith. And then look at verse 13.

And besides, they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house. And not only idle but also gossips and busybodies saying things which they ought not to.

So again, just painting the picture there of those who are looking for a life of ease and comfort and pleasure instead of piety and service to the church.

But refuse. Now something to draw out from this is that Paul supports remarriage. That marriage is biblical.

Paul also supports remarriage. Verse 14 it says, Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry. Now stop there.

[37 : 09] What did I just say? That the younger girls marry? No, the younger widows. Somebody who's a widow is somebody who was married and has lost their husband. That those who were

married lost their husband that they marry.

I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully for some have already turned aside after Satan.

Now this helps us understand the qualifications for an elder because we saw in the qualification elder that he must be the husband of one wife or a one woman man.

And we see the same phrase but the other way around with the qualifications of a widow that she must be the wife of one husband. Now if what was meant there is never remarried but in the entire life to have only had one husband then Paul would be here contradicting himself because he's saying I desire that the younger widows marry.

So there is not a contradiction but that that reading of a one woman man or a one man woman is not the right reading. But what it is saying is for a widow one husband at one time or for the man have had one wife at one time.

[38 : 28] So that helps us understand this helps us understand the qualifications of a widow not that she was only married once ever in her life because then Paul would not only be contradicting himself but he would be setting up these women for failure.

He's saying that you can have only been married once but if you've been widowed and you were married I desire that you remarry so that what then the church doesn't have to honor them when they are desolate.

It just does not make sense. One that so that is to say one at one time. To say otherwise would be contradicting verses 9 and 14.

Now some concluding uses that we can take out of our text. I want to make sure that I'm not misunderstood here is that well first of all there are various people who will have various needs at various times and the church and Christians is to use discernment and discretion in those various people.

Sometimes somebody who is not a widow or perhaps somebody who is a widow who has provision for a short period of time has for whatever reason calamity or injury or something that's tragic for a short period of time may be in need.

[39 : 49] That doesn't mean that they are to be refused because they're not really a widow who is over 60 and such and such. So there are various people who at various times may have various needs and every time discernment and discretion is to be used.

Next is the distinction of distribution. There's a distinction between helping somebody who for whatever reasons because of calamity has fallen into a temporary need to the distribution taking someone who is really a widow into the number of formal ongoing support.

So I want to make that distinction so that this isn't ruling out any other option of supporting those who don't meet that criteria. Maybe there's somebody who's 50 years old who has become a widow but has had an injury and can by no means work and support herself and has no money.

There are various needs to take into consideration with discernment and discretion. So first concluding use is that family must support their own.

Family must support their own who are really destitute. when somebody is really a widow and is really destitute, the first thing to think of is family. This is not a recommendation but it's a command.

[41 : 13] It's a fifth commandment. Family must support their own who are really destitute. And then after the family, if there is no family to support, then the church may help the destitute who are outside of the church.

church. It's not saying it's a sin to help somebody who is outside of the church. Perhaps your neighbor who is neither a widow nor goes to church has some tragic thing happen and they need help.

It's not a sin to help out your neighbor because they're not really a widow over 60 years old. The church may help the destitute outside of the church when using discernment and discretion.

We don't want to enable neglect of the fourth commandment of a good work ethics. Those who do not work shouldn't eat or don't eat. So next, the church ought to support the destitute outside the church.

Family must support their own. The church may help the destitute outside. The church ought to support the destitute inside the church. And when I say ought, I don't mean as a recommendation, but as I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself.

[42 : 27] Divine command. The church is to support the destitute inside the church. And the church's primary responsibility may include refusing some in order to recompense their own real widows.

The church's responsibility is to receive and to refuse. Now, contrary to common post-modern or progressive contemporary churches, the church is not a business.

The model of ecclesiology is not business driven by consumerism that is here to cater to the needs of the customers, of those who come through the doors.

The church is not a business driven by consumerism. The church is the household of God. And the church is composed of the family of God and the household of God.

And the family of God, the church is composed of the family of God as constituent members, as living stones in a spiritual temple of God with the spiritual presence of God.

[43 : 40] The church is the presence of God dwelling with us while we are pilgrims on our way to the heavenly city, the inheritance of the saints, that is, the homeland.

So actually, I'll say that again. The church is the household of God, composed of the family of God as constituent members, as living stones in the spiritual temple of God, with the spiritual presence of God dwelling with us while we are on our way to the heavenly city, the inheritance of the saints, the homeland.

Think of that next time you read through the Old Testament. That is the reality of what the church is. The church is not business. And the church functions as an embassy in a foreign land to feed and protect pilgrims.

I think this really helps understand the responsibility of the church to honor real widows and the need to not only receive, but also to refuse.

So the church functions as an embassy in a foreign land. Of course, you understand what an embassy is. If you go to a foreign land, the embassy is there, not for the citizens of that foreign land, but for those who are citizens of the homeland to protect them and to provide for them while they are away or while they are traveling in a foreign land.

[45 : 05] And that is a good way to understand how the church on earth is to function in a foreign land in this world. It's to protect the pilgrims who are on their way.

Pilgrims who are on their way are those who have been born anew into a new creation citizen. So before being Christians, we walked according to the course of the world, we were citizens of kingdom of darkness.

But being regenerated or being born again, being born anew, we were transferred out of that kingdom into the kingdom of light.

No longer citizens of the kingdom of darkness, no longer citizens of this world, but citizens of the kingdom of light, of Christ's kingdom, on our way to the homeland, which means we are now in a foreign land in this world.

And the church on earth functions as an embassy. For the pilgrims, that is those who have been born anew into a new creation citizenship, not a worldly citizenship, but a new creation citizenship, have been baptized as a sign of that spiritual reality, the reality of being born anew into a new creation citizenship.

[46 : 18] citizenship. And the baptism, which is a sign of that spiritual reality, functions as a passport would into an embassy, which is the affirmation of a credible profession of kingdom citizenship.

So somebody may just make a profession that they've been born again or in the citizen of, or in the, in the kingdom of Christ, but a person who doesn't even know the gospel or perhaps doesn't have any fruit, that confession, that profession isn't necessarily credible.

So the baptism is the affirmation of credible profession of kingdom, kingdom citizenship, and is the front door into church membership. Now, members of this new creation spiritual temple, which is, which, who are citizens of Christ's kingdom are only those who have been made a new creation. That is, they have died to sin and made alive in Christ by the spirit. The Bible says to see the kingdom of God, you must be born again.

So only those who are members of the new creation spiritual temple of Christ's kingdom are those who have been born again. Being born again is, like I said, that term regeneration, where while we, by nature, are dead to our sins and going according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, and quite content to do so, God, by his grace, disrupts us from that

course, dislodges us from the course of this world and the darkness that we are in and blinded by, and he relocates us into his kingdom and reorients us with faith and repentance.

[48 : 16] And this is made possible by Christ's coming, living, obeying righteousness, suffering, and dying as a substitute for his people, being buried and raised from the dead in power.

So the only way to the Father, the only way to this kingdom membership, citizens, sorry, kingdom citizenship is being united to Christ.

And being united by Christ is by receiving Christ, by believing the promises of the gospel, that all those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and turn to him for salvation will have forgiveness of sins, will have everlasting life, believing it not only to be true, but believing it personally and believing that that forgiveness of sins is mine, that Christ died as my substitute in my place.

My sins have been paid in full. Divine justice has been satisfied for my debt. Christ's righteousness is mine. Christ, I am robed in Christ's righteousness.

I have been made right before God. I will inherit eternal life with the saints and I will be blessed to all eternity with the saints in a new creation kingdom in glory without sin and without end.

[49 : 30] Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the church and we thank you for how you use the church in this world and a world filled with darkness to shine light, to feed your people, to protect your people, to provide for your people.

And we thank you that you have provided the means for us who were dead in our sins to be made alive in Christ. We thank you for your spirit, which you seal your people with and which you guide us and comfort us and instruct us and teach us.

And there's a indeed a down payment, a guarantee of the inheritance of the saints. I pray that you would help us to see the church as what it truly is, as not here to cater to the needs of the foreigners in a foreign land, but as a spiritual temple to protect and to provide for kingdom citizens who are pilgrims in this foreign land, and that as we may see this, the church and its mission rightly, that we may as a church do your, do your will and be faithful to your commands.

I pray that you would help us to apply discernment and discretion in understanding how we are to be faithful in all that you call us to do. We pray these things in Jesus name.

Amen.