

Calvary Chapel of El Paso Morning Ladies' Bible Study – Timothy

January 17, 2023 – Lesson 11

1 Timothy 5:17-25 – Without Prejudice or Partiality

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. James 3:17

Paul's Instructions concerning leaders

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. Hebrews 13:17

Introduction

Paul continued in his instruction to Timothy on how to oversee the churches of Ephesus and the surrounding area. We can “listen in” and learn much about how to follow the Lord and how to follow our church leaders. What does God expect of them? And of us? How does God provide for them? What is our part in this?

These teachings were based on the principles of the Law laid down by God in the Old Testament, and we will see specific examples. Jesus said,

Matthew 5:17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

READ 1 Timothy 5:17-25

Verses 17-18

Verse 17: elders = leaders; rule = preside; count worth = think deserving; honor = worth, value (NOT setting up as higher authority)

So we are to treasure our leaders in the church, especially those who minister the Word to us.

Verse 18 adds that these leaders are to be given proper pay. This is first laid out in the Old Testament Law. Deut. 25:14 *Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.*

Luke 10:7 *...the laborer is worthy of his hire...*

Verses 19-20

Verse 19: Again, this was Paul writing to Timothy. Here he gives the procedure for dealing with accusations and complaints against leaders.

There were to be 2 or 3 witnesses. This is a standard even beyond the Bible and God's people. It is based on God's principle laid out in the Old Testament Law. Deut. 19:15 *One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.*

It is really pretty obvious why this would be a good idea. There is a much better chance of true justice if more than one witness is required.

Verse 20: Rebuke involves various degrees of gentleness or firmness. Its purpose is to expose wrongdoing and instruct the person how to change. If a sin was committed, Timothy was instructed to admonish (rebuke) the leader before all the church as a warning to others. This seems harsh, but in the early church it was necessary to keep the people firmly following the will of the Lord. There were many influences outside and even inside the churches that were trying to destroy this work.

Verse 21: This is a very serious command, as we see from the way it is worded. They were to be without (1) preconceived preference or (2) favoritism. NO special treatment, privileges, or favoritism for any in leadership.

There are examples of this today in many churches. (1) Many in leadership expect special treatment, and people will give it to try to please them thinking that they are pleasing God; (2) also, many denominations have a hierarchy of levels of leadership; (2) often much time is spent trying to please each other, including the leadership. The Greek society of Timothy's time fed into this.

Instead: 1 Tim. 3:13 *For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.* Here we see that these deacons had gotten themselves (1) a "good step [up] in honor," and [implied] rewards in heaven, as well as (2) great boldness for the Lord. ... So the work of the Lord is furthered by them.

In our passage here in 1 Tim. 6, Paul wrote instructions concerning leadership. What about the rest of us? The same principles apply. Here is one example: 1 Tim. 6:17 *Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.*

Verse 22: Choose leaders slowly. Paul told Timothy, do not be quick to ordain leaders, so that he would not bring in the sin of an unqualified man and thereby be involved in it. Then he would be pure from all reproach concerning the leadership of the church.

For us, let's remember that the leaders of our church have heavy responsibilities. We can understand how they patiently work with those leaders under them. This way all of us are under the leading of the Lord. Let us be patient, too – and also serve as the Lord calls us through our leaders.

Verse 23: This verse is most likely parenthetical in a way. By keeping pure, Paul did not mean for Timothy to follow the extreme religious practices that included drinking water only.

Paul was saying, Timothy, take care of your health!

In that time, a little wine – diluted – was used as medicine. (Sometimes they even had to put wine or vinegar in their water to make it safe to drink.) So Paul was saying, take your medicine so you can stay well and strong.

Note that “a little wine” was recommended. This compares with “much wine” that was spoken against in many places in the Bible. Here is an example:

1 Tim. 3:8 *Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre.*

Verses 24-25: Sins will be found out, just like good works. Sometimes it is evident right away; sometimes more comes out later. Let’s be satisfied to be aware of what comes to light so it can be dealt with by leadership, and not try to find out more. Some things are even left for the judgment at the end. It is enough to know that God deals with it all at the right time. Prov. 15:3 *The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.*

Conclusion

The responsibilities are great of those leaders in our churches that oversee our leaders. Let us honor our leaders, value them, and be generous to them. And those who specifically give us the Word are even more valuable. Their job is so important, and their challenges are great.

Church discipline of the leadership is an especially serious matter, and we are to respect the process as it plays out. It is also a warning to all to not sin in ways that bring that discipline.

We are also to respect the process of choosing leadership.

The strongest words of warning in this passage were against putting one person ahead of another (partiality, prejudice) or playing favorites. We people have such a tendency to do this, and it is especially harmful within the church. Each of us is a special, one-of-a-kind treasure to the Lord. We have no place to hurt one to benefit another.

A great lesson for us in the passage is to let God be God and let Him work through our leadership as HE chooses. Sometimes we will see the results, good or bad. Some things will come out only later, but eventually God will take care of it all.

Timothy was indeed a special young man to be able to take on all this responsibility!

*This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;
Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some
having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck.*

1 Timothy 1:18-19