Supplemental Sermon Notes: 1 Timothy 5:17-25 (page 993)

The Care and Feeding of Pastors

Introduction:

- Paul’s purpose in writing this letter: Tell “…how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household…”
- Gives instruction regarding different aspects of church.
- Leadership has always been on Paul’s mind throughout the letter.

- Elders (always used in the plural).
  - Men who are accountable to God for the care of those of the church.
  - Often viewed as a privilege today, as if these men are more valuable.
  - But it’s clearly portrayed as a responsibility rather than a privilege.
  - Hebrews 13:17: “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account…”
  - In the end, elders will appear before God and ANSWER regarding the spiritual condition of the church!
    - NOT for superficial issues…
    - But for how He was presented and represented through the presentation and living out of His Word….
    - …and how well we received and grew under His Word.
    - How they led people (saved and unsaved) toward godliness.
  - That puts a lot of pressure on the elders.

- Here Paul is speaking of specific elders:
  - The “labor” or “toil” of these elders – vigorous, exhausting work.
  - They lead well
    - Guiding, administering, counseling, & caring for the church.
  - Preach and teach
  - We call these elders “Pastors.”
I. Double Honor to Pastors (vv 17-18)

• Not “double pay,” but “a two-fold honor;” “honored in two ways.”

1. Pay. (See v 18)
   • Paul quotes from the OT and the NT & calls them both “Scripture.”
   • Deuteronomy 25:4
     ▪ “Be good to your ox!”
     ▪ Argument from lesser to greater:
       • If Moses said to give oxen fair compensation for their efforts, how much more should pastors receive fair compensation for their efforts?
   • Luke 10:7
     ▪ Jesus said disciples sent to preach deserve their wages.
   • Point: Pastors who labor in the ministry ought to be fairly compensated because the duties are so demanding he won’t have time to do other jobs.
   • He should be concerned only with the Lord’s business.

2. Probably respect, because of God – the One who put them in that position.
   • Careful! This is easy to over-do!
     o Acts 14:15 “Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news…”
     o Revelation 22:9, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”
     o Can lead to:
       ▪ Temptation to use the pastor to guide your life instead of Jesus.
       ▪ Temptation for the pastor to become “puffed up” with pride.
       • Position calls for greater discipline and humility, NOT greater pride and power.

II. Discipline of Pastors (vv 19-21)

A. Make sure of due process.
   • “Every fool hath a bolt to shoot at a faithful preacher.” (John Trapp)
   • Church is not to seriously consider accusation unless real evidence is brought by 2 or 3 witnesses.
   • From tense of verb: “Stop accepting such things!”
• James 3:6-10: “And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so.”

• Due process is not just limited to pastors! It’s part of the church.
  o Deuteronomy 19:15: “A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established.”
  o Matthew 18:15-17, “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.”
  o 2 Corinthians 13:1: “This is the third time I am coming to you. Every charge must be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.”

B. Gravity & severity of a pastor’s sin calls for public rebuke before the Church(v 20)
   1. Not gossip: charges correctly established; pastor is guilty of sin.
      • Must be confronted for good of the church (so they may stand in fear) & good of the sinner (so he may repent).
   3. Sin is public in nature (implied by public rebuke and persistence of sin).
      • It is a threat to the whole community.
      • To look the other way or give a slap on the wrist is to give public approval to the sin and the sinner.
      • Note: the extent of the rebuke is not specified here – Probably depends on the situation.

C. V 21 – Responsibility to discipline goes all the way to God, Jesus, and the angels.
   • Therefore, we dare not prejude or play favorites.
III. Select Pastors Carefully (the best way to avoid discipline - vv 22-25)

A. “Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands” (v22)
   • Symbolic way to signify public recognition of authority.
   • Commissioning someone for service before the congregation.
   • Refers to choosing new Elders or Pastors.

B. Personal aside to Timothy – v 23.
   • CAN be used to point out that consuming alcohol is not, by itself, necessarily sinful.
     o But that’s not Paul’s point.
   • Context leads us to think that Timothy is listening to some who say he should abstain
     from alcohol and only drink water as a way of legalistically earning favor with God.
   • Paul doesn’t want Timothy to slide into the legalistic errors of the false teachers.

C. Character is proven with time (vv 24-25)
   • It’s easy to see the sinful character of some and the righteous character of others.
   • But the character of MOST people, good or bad, will be revealed over time.
   • Therefore, when selecting leaders, go slow!
     o Time will reveal whether or not a potential leader has the character to lead.
     o So we must take the time to observe before selecting.
   • This isn’t necessarily easy today.

D. Returning to v 22, note the grave consequences of choosing hastily!
   • “Nor take part in the sins of others; keep yourself pure.”
   • Taken out of context, this can be used to say:
     o “Do not be deceived: ‘Bad company ruins good morals’” (1 Cor. 15:33)
   • In the context, this suggests that by selecting pastors hastily, we can participate in
     their sin.
   • Before God, we take some of the responsibility.
   • We can probably also extend this to include refusing to properly discipline pastors.
   • If, out of negligence, we appoint a person of improper character, or we LEAVE
     someone in a leadership in SPITE of ongoing sin, to some degree, we share in the sin
     and guilt in some sense!

APPLICATIONS: