

Sermon study 1 Timothy 5:3-16 "Reform"

Use this outline as a guide. You can talk about it a different way if you like but whatever you do make sure the depth of this study is depth of APPLICATION. Do not make it your goal to get sidetracked determining the meaning. The goal is to move forward from the message into actual real life and specific application. Be creative and follow up about application. Imagine a church where the people actually applied what they learned. Wow.

The problem this sermon addresses

Paul addressed the household budget. The household of God was spending money in the wrong places. It needed welfare reform.

From one website (<http://www.pastoralcareinc.com/resources/benevolence-outline/>):

During harsh and economic times, most of our churches in America are facing an increased demand for help and benevolence. Even though benevolence and reaching out to the poor has been an active part of the church, some are facing the dilemma of whether to continue such benevolence or to focus upon their own set of needs.

Most of our churches in America are struggling financially. While most have a strong desire to help the poor, they are under heavy pressures to keep their doors open, with reports of decreasing membership and giving along with the increasing cost of operating a church...

The question is how should the church as an institution spend its money? Read the following article and discuss the quotes:

<http://dollarsanddoctrine.com/2011/11/christian-financial-alliance-what-is-the-best-thing-a-church-can-do-with-money/>

The Central Proposition of the text:

Institutional benevolence was not for all widows but only for true widows in the church.

Main Idea:

The church exists to make ministers not ministries.

I. True Widows (1 Timothy 5:3-8)

A. Paul enacts welfare reform in Timothy's church calling for only the widows who are true widows to receive aid from the church's finances. Specifically two criteria are in view: 1. The widow must have no family to care for her 2. She must be a godly woman devoted to prayer.

1. Paul makes it clear that disciples are responsible to care for their own family. He says it is pleasing to God. Contrast this with Matthew 15:1-6.
2. Discuss how you believe retirement homes may interact with this today. In what way should we care for the elderly members of our family even if they are in a retirement home?
3. Notice that Paul is instituting a criteria for who gets aid from the church treasury. Based on this principle how should the church as an institution treat handle requests for money from needy folks with a sad story?

II. Enroll (1 Timothy 5:9-10)

A. Paul expands on what he said previously, further narrowing the criteria for aid by adding the stipulation that to be enrolled as a widow in the church a woman must also be over 60 and have a

good track record of service within the church. The word enroll likely has in view regular, monthly, aide. This aide seems to come with the stipulation of devoted service to the church.

1. Read Luke 2:36-37. Notice the description of this widow. This is the kind of lady Paul seems to be describing.
2. Read Acts 9:36-43. Tabitha seems to illustrate a sort of widows corps that serves other widows. The widows corps was likely made up of church sponsored widows who ministered to other widows.
3. Notice that Paul narrowed again the criteria for institutional aide.

III. Do Not Enroll (1 Timothy 5:11-15)

A. Paul explains why eligible widows should be over 60. Young widows will not be devoted to ministry but instead will be distracted finding husbands. This is key in that it demonstrates that Paul had in view the idea that widows receiving aide were also focused on serving themselves. This was not a free ride.

1. Read Acts 2:32-37 and 6:1-2. Notice that here in our passage Paul is prescribing welfare reform in the church. (As a side note the Jerusalem church model is not prescribed anywhere else in Scripture and quickly needed aide from other churches to stay afloat themselves (Paul's reference to the poor in his letters is a reference to this church).)

IV. Unburdened (1 Timothy 5:16)

A. Paul reinforces the idea of family helping out relatives by calling out believing women specifically. Believing women should make sure that their own widows are taken care of. Incidentally, this is the godly thing that will one day qualify them for institutional aide. Paul sums up his points when he says the purpose for this reform is so that the church as an institution would not be burdened, so that it can care for the "true" widows. These widows, as we have already demonstrated, were ministers in the church. Essentially Paul was making the case that the church as an institution exists to make ministers not ministries.

1. Read James 1:27. How do Paul's words relate to pure religion?
2. Read Matthew 26:6-13. Jesus compares the worship of him through this anointing with the worship of Him through service to the poor. The needy of the world exist as a means to worship God as individual believers.
 - a) Read Deuteronomy 24:17-22, Isaiah 1:12-17 and 58:1-12. Notice that individual worship is in view not institutional worship.

V. You Are the Program

A. Read Luke 10:25-37. Notice that each person who passed by could use the excuse that their institutional group could offer benevolence. Jesus expands the definition of our neighbor-worshipping God through loving our neighbor as ourself is not narrow. Contrast this with Paul's call for institutional welfare reform and the main idea becomes obvious. The church as an institution exists to make ministers not ministries.

Implications:

The church does not exist, as an institution, to run soup kitchens and thrift stores. It exists to make ministers not ministries. The needy of the world exist as a means for these ministers to worship God individually through specific acts of benevolence to their needy "neighbor." If society is to be changed by the church it will be because of our worship. If someone were to ask me how our church (meaning the institution that is Barabbas Road Church) is helping the poor, the helpless etc. I would reply: "we are making ministers."

Application:

Don't wait for a program to help the needy you see around you. **YOU ARE THE PROGRAM!!!** Discuss how to specifically apply this message.