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| 1  1 Timothy 5:17-25 Sermon Outline  03/17/24  “The High and Serious Calling of Elders”  INTRO:  pastor famously said:  “everything rises and falls on leadership”  Everything?  Well Bible lots to say about leadership  Prov. 28:16  “*A leader who lacks discernment abounds in oppressions, But he who hates greedy gain will prolong his days*.”  EX: 1 + 2 Kings = unstable and volatile time = corrupt evil kings, quick turnover rate = assassinations  Shortest reign: Zimri = northern kingdom Israel | 2  = Just 7 days!  = megalomaniac assassinated King Elah, but in turn was approached by armies of Israel  Committed suicide by burning himself and the citadel of palace down  Leading nation = double-edged sword  Positive end = high and privileged calling to lead people to righteousness  Negative end = if corrupt = affect nation/reign won’t last long  MAIN POINT:  Similarly, ministry = double-edged sword. Elders = highest and holy calling but also comes with public consequences if you fail to be example of godly leadership in church |
| 3  So V. 17:  “*The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching*.”  Outset: Awkward for me to preach  Not doing this for personal gain  Not rebuking you  Happens to be next text  (But I do except all forms of credit and debit cards, cash, and checks too) \* humor  But I am also not going to apologize that this text is here  2 Tim. 3:16  “*every word of God is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness*.” | 4  Now this verse not only = general principle  But elders maybe not being paid enough  Maybe false teachers paid instead of those who were actually preaching/teaching the word  Some take V. 17 = not financial but just attitude  Certainly Heb. 13:7  “*Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith*.”  But also the financial as well! Attitude expressed through financial reward  Consistent with Paul’s use of “honor” = widows  Not = bad elders + good elders  but good elders + even more better elders (preaching and teaching) |
| 5  This verse not = all elders need to be paid like their pastors  Some churches = staff + lay elders  Depends on church and budget, etc.  “double-honor” = not necessarily mean my salary x 2 of everyone else  = Not Rolls Royce, mansion on coast of Oregon, etc. etc.  What it does mean:  elder who preaches/teaches well = adequately compensated for labor in word  Doesn’t have to worry about next bill to be paid  Doesn’t have to worry about feeding/supporting family, etc.  Fully focus on ministry | 6  Now some churches do understand principle, but are lit. unable to pay pastor a lot  Not ideal situation  Praise Lord = Bethel is a very giving and generous church for being a small church  I don’t take that for granted  But if church is able to pay pastor but they don’t whether out of neglect or mismanagement of funds, shame on that church…  ILLUST: Seminary class with guest lecturer  pastor underpaid, drew out on whiteboard  “work hard” = kopiao = labor to point of exhaustion/fatigue  Further: proportionate pay to how hard he works |
| 7  Why “double-honor”?  V. 18  *“For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing,” and “The laborer is worthy of his wages.”*  1. Deut. 25:4  2. Jesus = Luke 10:7  Argument from lesser to greater  Explain how ox is worked  -Muzzled  -Ox and cart crushes head of grain = kernel  -Ox should be allowed to eat fruit of his labor  Similarly  “workman is worthy of his wages”  Then to elders!  How much more should elder reap benefits of his labors?! | 8  1 Corinthians 9:11 rhetorical question:  “if we reap spiritual things, is it too much to ask to reap physical rewards from you?”  Salvation matters = most important  More important = temporal things on earth  Not talking about dualism = simply point out biblical principle  Romans 8:32  “*He who did not spare His only Son, how shall He not also freely give us all things*?”  All things = physical + spiritual  Luther: why would I want to stoop down from being a pastor to a king?  Being elder = highest/most holy calling = great joy  Only natural to reap physical benefits from spiritual |
| 9  Galatians 6:6  “*The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him*.”  Serious thing to bring false accusation against elder  V. 19  “*Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses*.”  One of likely issues plaguing churches of Ephesus = elders accused of falsehood  All sorts of reasons:  -Jealousy  -Enmity  -demonic influence  Nothing new:  Joseph accused sexual assault = Potiphar’s wife | 10  Moses’ leadership + authority called into question by own siblings Miriam + Aaron = coup  Paul accused of being in ministry = money  Ps. 105:15  “*Do not touch My anointed ones, And do My prophets no harm.”*  Many in pentecostal/charismatic movement = love this verse, take out of context  No prophets/anointed ones today like in Old/New Testaments  ILLUST:  Steve = “touch not the Lord’s anointed”  It makes me queasy = someone says “you are anointed, or we are anointed”  language gets abused in some circles |
| 11  Often used as cop out to live a sinful lifestyle  Ps. 105:15 = what we can learn is that we should think twice before bringing an accusation against an elder  David had tremendous humility towards King Saul even though Saul was clearly disqualified from his kingship when he said far be it from me to touch the Lord’s anointed  Remember when Saul relieving himself?  David cut off piece of robe  But even that convicted David  When the high priest was rebuking Paul in Acts, Paul reviled the high priest unknowingly saying “God will judge you, you whitewashed wall!”  But then, he later said “I shouldn’t have said that, for it says “you should not revile the high priest” | 12  Now weren’t not Israel nor are there apostles and prophets personally commissioned by the Lord Jesus Christ, but we see in these examples that even in exposing an elder’s sins…we should do it in a posture of sorrow and not gloating over them in pride  But sometimes elders do sin and need to be rebuked  Take him through same process of church discipline + except its more public and most likely ministry is over  V. 20  “*Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning*.”  = could be ongoing sin  = could be major one time sin  -Like striking someone in the face losing temper  Or hidden sin like habitual lust that is not repented of  Depends on the sin and how frequent it is |
| 13  Sadly these things do happen from time to time  One of hardest things to do for pastor/elder to confront fellow elders in faith  It should break our hearts to do this  Question:  Are you more concerned about reputation of your pastor or the reputation of God’s holiness?  Sadly many churches think they are doing service in first but they actually make things worse  ILLUST:  Man on staff, office moved, found playboy magazines  -church didn’t know and blamed new pastor for ousting the pastor they knew  -former pastor now has high profile ministry and current church he’s at doesn’t know what happened | 14  There is nothing good that comes out of hiding sin, and hush-hushing a pastor’s moral failure  1. It makes light of the holiness and purity of the church  2. It only creates evil suspicions and conclusions that are based on false assumptions  3. It also betrays the trust of the church when the leadership hides things that shouldn’t hidden  -I’m not saying church should spill all the details of  gross immorality, there’s a way to tastefully and  discreetly do that without being egregious in  details.  But needs to inform congregation  Double-edged sword of ministry =  faithfulness = rewarded and protected  Unfaithful = exposed and cut out of ministry |
| 15  Fear = good thing proper context  Fear = life preserver  Fear = preserve you from sin and hell  Proverbs = “fear of the lord is the beginning of wisdom”  Proverbs = “by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil”  Fear = not of sheer terror but of trembling at the thought of bringing reproach to the name of Christ  Fear = motivator for obedience  Biblical principle: 1 Cor. 9  In this case = sins = deathly consequences  “*these things are examples to us so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved.”* And that“*they were written for our instruction upon whom the end of the ages have come.”* | 16  Deut. 13 = entice after other gods = execute him!  Kill the idolater why? Verse 11  “All Israel will hear and what?... “Fear him”  Or you remember Acts 5: Ananias and Saphira  After striking them dead: 5:11  “*And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things*.”  You can imagine how hard to confront elder  God forbid day comes when I or any other elder have to confront another  Incredibly difficult and stressful  Temptation would be to do nothing  Takes courageous action |
| 17  V. 21  “*I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality*.”  Paul brings greatest witnesses to the witness stand,  God himself + angels  Heaven itself is watching = that’s why Matt 18 Jesus = says whatever you have bound on earth would have already been bound in heaven = heaven already confirmed it  Not necessarily guardian angels = Lord of hosts  angelic armies!  God takes holiness and purity of church very seriously  Listen to Revelation 2:5 | 18  Church of Ephesus  “*they did not remember from where they have fallen, repent and do the deeds they did at first, he will come and remove their lampstand from its place*.”  V. 22  “*Do not lay hands on anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others*.”  What can make/break church dependent on character of person = ordained as elder  Timothy be free from sin or “keep yourself pure”  It’s ok to drink a little wine = stomach  Timothy = abstaining completely = stumbling  Water = unsafe to drink  Wine = only real safe drink |
| 19  We don’t have issue of ancient times  I already mentioned several times why verses like this cannot be used to endorse or even give permission for drinking  If you missed those sermons, then give it a listen = go more detail  Finally V. 24  “*The sins of some men are quite evident, going before them to judgment; for others, their sins follow after. Likewise also, deeds that are good are quite evident, and those which are otherwise cannot be concealed*.”  With that little anecdote Paul returns to subject of raising up elders too quickly  Some churches have rigorous eldership process  Others not as rigorous  But both need to have enough time to observe character | 20  Sometimes sins of elder you see from a mile away  Others’ sins are not as obvious  Likewise good deeds obvious, not so good cannot be concealed  This is a sobering text on leadership in church  Great weight/responsibility = elders shepherd flock of God needs  We covet your prayers Lord = above reproach = keep us from evil  That Les, Larry, Ron, Jeff, Jason and myself + any future elder would abide in Jesus Christ and stay close to Him  As much as church depends on faithful elders, elders are imperfect  Might fail you at times (God forbid) |
| 21  At end of day = you need to look not like me, or any other elder in the church  You need to look like and be conformed to Jesus Christ  If an elder is doing his job properly, his people will be more dependent on Christ than him  And more dependent on what the Word of God says than him  Yes, it’s true Paul said to Corinthians “Imitate me”… but “imitate me AS I imitate Christ”  As authoritative, inspired apostle of Jesus Christ = Paul’s goal = conform into image of Christ, not image of Paul  And we elders are much more fallible, sinful than authoritative apostle like Paul  How much more should we imitate Christ! | 22  It’s true as saying goes “a church does not rise higher than its leadership”  But what if leadership fails you, what do you do?  You look to Christ  Heb. 12:1-2  “*Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, laying aside every weight and the sin which so easily entangles us, let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God*.”  He is archegos – trail blazes path for us to follow  You must not fix eyes on me, but on Jesus who will never fail you, never forsake you, perfect, unchanging, sinless God in flesh |
| 23  But are you even able to fix your gaze on Jesus Christ?  If Christ not Lord + Savior = impossible to fix gaze on Jesus on your own will/strength  Bible = dead in your trespasses and sins  You are fixing gaze on your sin  But it’s a lie, sin will never satisfy you  Finding your satisfaction in sin is like drinking salt water, the more you drink it, the more thirsty you will become  It will brings consequences in this life and eternal consequences in the next  But Jesus set face like flint and fixed His gaze on cross for your sins  Fixed gaze on obedience to Father to fulfill all righteousness on your behalf | 24  Fixed gaze on resurrection so that salvation would be complete and secured  Fixed his gaze on the father’s wrath so that you would receive the Father’s mercy  If you believe that Christ died for your sins and that salvation only comes by grace through faith alone, you will be saved  Turn from your sins  Flee to Jesus Christ  Join the church in fixing its gaze on Jesus Christ, the true and sovereign head of the church  The King of Kings |