

1Tim 23-12-10b

We're ready now to pick up our study here in 1 Timothy. And isn't it interesting that all of these exhortations from Paul, beginning with the supplications and prayers and thanksgiving, are conscious of the church's role in society. There's a lot being said today about what we ought to be doing in terms of social action.

The social gospel has reemerged as a driving force for a lot of what you might call public Christianity. Let's do the Sermon on the Mount. Let's be charitable to everybody.

Let's sue for peace at all costs and sympathize with anybody who is under attack or being devastated by war and so on. And we have very specific instructions about what our public posture is to be. First of all, it is local.

Of course, you could say, well, they didn't have the internet back in Paul's day. But evangelism is local. We speak to someone face to face.

It is rare to the vanishing point that someone just picks up a tract or reads an article online and says, well, I think I'll believe in the Lord Jesus. The Holy Spirit doesn't indwell computers. He doesn't indwell pieces of paper.

He doesn't indwell books. It is people. And as we spend our time endeavoring to shine as lights and reflect God's glory and God's love, that is what draws people.

We are personal members of the body of Christ, and we are indwelt and hopefully filled and gifted and sealed and enabled and empowered by God's spirit for love and good works. We should be examples of that that cause others to see that light and be drawn to God, glorify God, look for their own personal relationship with God. So this witness is primary.

It is a glaring absence that we'd have no calls to social action. Paul never tells the church to go down and picket the slave market or shout angry words at the prostitutes or the tax collectors or those who are worshiping pagan gods to go down and wave signs and shake fists at the people going to the temples of the Greek and Roman gods. It is always mind your business, work quietly with your hands, have a good witness and a good testimony in that way.

So these exhortations really focus on, first of all, being holy ourselves and reflecting that in the public arena, allowing it to be seen. So the notion here that we have women who adorn themselves with good works. Remember in Proverbs chapter seven, the young man who is wandering the streets of the town and in 710 of Proverbs, a woman met him with the attire of a harlot and a crafty heart, the crafty harlot.

People draw conclusions based on how we dress. Young women in this day and age can be very distracting by failing to cover up properly, by failing to wear clothing that is

modest and is in keeping with the idea that I'm not here to just create salacious thoughts in anybody I happen to pass by. Those who are unmarried are waiting for God's leading and God's timing for the man who is going to take over responsibilities from in those days.

And even in more recent times, the father looks out for his daughter until such a time as he hands those responsibilities off to the husband who makes a formal and public commitment. This is why we have weddings. Everybody needs to know who giveth this woman.

And the father steps forward and says, I do. In some cases, the parents can chime in together and say we do. But it is a public testimony to God's order that the father looks out for his daughters until such a time as those responsibilities are handed off.

I was just reading about Abraham's servant. We had that passage in the first session in Genesis 17. But the situation of Rebecca, her father Bethuel has died.

And so she is living in the house of her brother. And it is his call. And he also defers to her judgment.

Do you want to go back with the servant? Do you want to go? And there was a he is the final authority, but he engages in conversation with his sister as to whether or not she wants to go. And they say the servant is ready to go back. The Lord has led him to Rebecca.

He wants to take her right now. And the family says, oh, that's too soon. This is all so sudden.

Please, can you delay for a week or 10 days? 10 days is mentioned, interestingly, there. And the servant says, I really want to put it back to my master's house with Rebecca. And so they ask her, what would you like to do? She says, I'm ready to go now.

And so that is the final decision. But there is this protective and interested care for a woman. And it is in her immediate household until such a time as a new household is established with a husband.

And that is to be professed. It is to be visible. It is to be noticeable as part of the public testimony of a church.

And it isn't just the woman. She gets mentioned here in terms of submission and this model of male leadership, which Paul goes all the way back to Genesis to establish on the divine model that Adam was formed first and then Eve. Transgression enters the human race when Eve steps outside that order and she does something on her own initiative without conferring with Adam.

She is led by the serpent instead of by her husband. And that is how sin enters the world and death by sin. The death passes upon all men.

It is the example that he refers to. Verse 14, Adam was not deceived. The woman being deceived fell into transgression.

If there is going to be deception, let it be the man who gets deceived. He is the guy that is on the hook. And that is a different subject.

Verse 15 is very fascinating. Nevertheless, she will be saved. She will be delivered in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness with self-control.

So then the question becomes, who is the they? The idea here is that the woman is vindicated. She fulfills her divinely ordained role by way of bearing children. And this is the positive aspect.

And her role, if she wants to exert authority, is exert authority in the sphere to which it has been given and assigned and is profitable. And this is rearing the children, raising the children in the home. And this is within the scope and guidelines established by the father and the husband.

He is to rule well his household, having his children in submission. This is largely going to be mediated through and in partnership with the wife and mother. She is the on-site, on-hand guidance.

But this is what she was created for. In the garden, before Adam and Eve exit, God says that she is going to be the child bearer, and by extension, the child raiser. It is an assigned, ordained function of God.

And there's nothing more indicative of the lack of attention and lack of respect for God's order in these days than when people decide that whatever they came out of the womb as, male or female, they're going to change it on their own B.S. This is just the furthest extension of the idea that I don't have to conform myself to the divine design. Remembering that a man's submission to Christ is submission to the father. It is the father who ordained the Lord Jesus Christ to be the head of all things to the church.

And the men who function in a church are looking to the Lord Jesus Christ and his communication through the apostles as to how a church should function. They don't make it up on their own. They don't go off the rails and say, well, we're in charge, we can do what we want.

The head of the man is Christ. And this is in the church and in all things pertaining to that exercise of authority that has been assigned to the man. In the same way that the functions and specifications for worship in Israel were given to the priests, and they had authority to perform sacrifices, to supervise the feasts, to do the morning and evening

sacrifices, to declare clean and unclean, and what is acceptable and what is defiled, to judge whether a sacrifice was worthy or not.

Is this a spotted or blemished sacrifice? Is this a worthy Passover lamb? The priests had that function. It was assigned to them. They weren't any better judge of these things than other Israelites, but that was their assignment as Levites.

And as the priestly section, not even all Levites could do those things, only the sons of Aaron. There were many other Levites, but they weren't descended from Aaron and they couldn't be priests. And you can make all kinds of arguments about equality and sufficiency and excellence and everything else, but it was God's assignment.

And in normal circumstances, God raised up judges in Israel. And with one exception, they were men. And in the days when you had Deborah as a judge in Israel, it was because the women were more level-headed and capable and willing and obedient than the men.

The men had become weak-kneed and Barak couldn't lead the army anywhere without Deborah helping him along. And it was an indictment. It was a condemnation.

It was a symbolic telltale of how insipid and ungodly the men in Israel had become. And it wasn't a model for future generations. God didn't start raising up women priests or women prophets.

Of all of the prophets, major and minor, in the Old Testament, none of them are women. You have some examples of daughters in the New Testament that prophesy. You have the prophecy in Joel that your sons and daughters will prophesy.

And prophesying seems to have been a unique and temporary function that is a harbinger of things to come. So when Paul says, she will be saved by her childbearing, he is looking at the woman that is first mentioned in verse 14, Eve standing in for all women. And so this is representative of a species, a class, a group, so to speak.

It isn't childbearing as such that procures deliverance or salvation, but it is the fulfillment that women look for when they aspire to leadership in the church is misdirected. That instinct to lead and to teach and to exhort and to encourage should be directed at children, not at men. It is a fine and wonderful instinct, but point it in the right direction.

You can think of the instinct to procreate. It's not sinful in and of itself, but you've got to aim it in the right direction, or you end up with rape or incest or adultery or fornication or whatever. It is a healthy inbuilt impulse, but it has to be exercised.

It has to operate within divine parameters to be blessed and to be a blessing. And outside of those divine parameters, you take that same impulse and it causes no end of grief and problems and discourages the fruit of the spirit. It discourages proper function,

both personally and in the periphery.

So these things are there for a reason, and they are blessed by God when they function within bounds. You watch a football game, you can have a 99-yard run from scrimmage, but if you step out of bounds even a fraction of an inch, the entire run is disqualified. And you can't say, well, but it was such a good run.

He caught such a great pass. He eluded these tacklers in such a tremendous fashion. We just ought to award him the touchdown anyway.

One step out of bounds invalidates, disqualifies, and nothing wrong with having a great run, making a great catch, performing a wonderful play as a team. But if somebody has a false start, if somebody lines up in the neutral zone, if somebody breaks a rule in the conduct of it, the quality of it is not the issue. Did you conform to the rules? Did you play fair? And there is nothing wrong with a woman explaining and setting forth as Priscilla does with Apollos.

That's a wonderful thing, but they take him aside. It is not in the public arena. She doesn't stand up in the synagogue and say, well, that was a wonderful sermon, Apollos, but let me add a few things that you didn't cover.

That never happened. It didn't happen in the churches. It is symbolic.

It is not a communication of ability or quality, or it's not dismissive or belittling in any way. It is a public testimony. The family and how well the household functions is a public testimony, and that's why it qualifies or disqualifies an overseer as we see coming up here in the next few verses.

If they continue in faith and love, this is talking about the women. The woman is not saved because her kids all went astray and askew and they didn't continue in faith and love. Paul switches to the plural here because he's talking about the woman thinking of Eve as the mother of all living and as the representative woman.

And he says it was her stepping outside this pattern that caused transgression to enter and she was deceived into so doing. And there is widespread talk and social pressure that is deceptive in the modern day. But she standing in for all women who are wives and potentially mothers will be delivered in childbearing if they, the women, this is still talking about the women.

She can have 12 children, but if she's a rascalion disobedient and messed up woman, if she's a silly woman who is led astray when people come into her home and things Paul talks about in other places, she's not going to be delivered. They is still the woman. It's a little bit tricky here that it switches from singular to plural, but notice children have not been mentioned in the context.

She will be saved in childbearing. If it had said she will be saved by the progress of her children, if they continue, you could have children be the antecedent of they, but there is no antecedent plural noun referring to children. So just circle they and go back to women.

This is talking about women and the women will be delivered, will be vindicated, will be justified. Remember, wisdom is justified by her children. This here is she will be delivered in childbearing, child rearing, responsibility for children.

If they, these women continue in faith, love and holiness with self-control and there is a bit of a chiasmic structure here. This is symmetrical with verse nine, women, the women, and he begins and ends with the women plural. And then, they really goes all the way back to verse nine, the women who adorn themselves in modest apparel, propriety, moderation, good works in verse 10, continuing in faith, love, and holiness with self-control.

They, so you can circle they and go all the way back up to the women of verse nine. What are these faith and love? We saw these in chapter one, verse five. The goal of our instruction is love from a good, a pure heart, a good conscience and a genuine faith, faith and love.

This is, this is the goal, not did you give a good sermon? Did you tell those men how the cow ate the cabbage or anyone else in the church? Your vindication, your deliverance, your acceptability, as it were, our salvation makes us acceptable. We are acceptable in the beloved, Paul says, and the acceptability, the vindication, the self-worth that women seek when they are running into these areas of ambition. I want to, I want a job that makes a lot of money and demands and commands respect.

I want to be a, an officer high up in the ranks. I want to, I want to do this. I want to do that.

The, for a Christian woman, a woman who does those things that accord with godliness finds her vindication in fulfilling her divinely assigned role. That's acceptability. That is exploiting and fulfilling salvation.

And it is done in faith, in love, the sanctification or holiness. You can read a first Thessalonians four, three through eight in this regard. Uh, what does this entail? Um, abstaining from immorality.

You find this in, again, first Thessalonians four, three through eight says to abstain from immorality, uh, to have a separated and sanctified marriage. Each one of you knows how to take a wife for himself, a wife for himself in sanctification and honor, not in the passion of lust like the heathen who do not know God. Relationship cohabitation and so on is not to be based on, uh, isn't the cohabitation great.

Isn't this a wonderful experience? Not in the passion of lust as the heathen who do not know God. This is to be a distinguishing mark of believers and see no one goes beyond what is proper and defraud his brother in this matter. And this has to do with the fathers and the brothers in the church.

This is a brother in the faith who is responsible for a daughter or a brother who is responsible for his wife. And that there is not hanky panky going on where, uh, illicit relationships are taking place. And this defrauds someone who has been assigned that responsibility because the Lord is an avenger in all these things.

As we previously told you and saw solemnly testified, God keeps track of our behavior in our assigned roles and functions. God did not call us for uncleanness, but in sanctification, in separateness, in not looking like the world, not acting like the world, not blending in with the world. Therefore, he who rejects this instruction rejects not man, but God who has also given his Holy spirit to you.

And once again, conforming to these seemingly outdated ideas, it isn't, Oh, well, those cultural prudes of the ancient day. And, you know, that was for then we're, we're in a, uh, an enlightened society. These things have been ordained since creation, the structure of a marriage, one man, one woman, God invented that in the garden of Eden and they too become one flesh and they are united.

They are dedicated. They are committed for life. If death does us part, there are other opportunities.

After Sarah's death, Abraham marries Keturah. And, uh, if you want a good Bible trivia question, even though Abraham was the friend of God and the father of many nations and is extolled and, uh, his faith was credited as righteousness and all the rest of it. Uh, if you read the section about Abraham, he still had an Achilles heel and he had concubines.

And aside from the, the six sons that he has with Keturah who themselves have sons who are counted as children of Keturah so that they total like 17, he actually only has six with Keturah, but the grandsons are accorded son status as sons of Keturah, even though they're really grandsons. But then he also had concubines that, that rehabilitation that Abraham gets after age a hundred, he's got to be 120, 130 years old, and he's got concubines. And he has to send the children of those concubines away to a far country so that they are not in competition with Isaac.

Uh, the area of marriage and relationship is fraught and it is sanctification to endeavor, to operate within the parameters that God has established because God is an Avenger in all these things. Once again, I'm reading first Thessalonians four, three through eight. Um, and this, uh, propriety, this self-control, um, this is the good taste and the, the modesty that we saw back in verse nine.

So looking back here as we conclude chapter two, when congregations assemble for public worship, what should it look like? Prayers should reflect a sensitivity to the national fate to Kings and all who are in authority. And not that they be overthrown, not that they be subverted, not that they be resisted, not to foment and support rebellion, but that during the time that a man is Caesar, during the time that someone is an ethnic or a centurion or a governor or any other function, this is in the Roman empire. The list of abuses and excesses and oppressions is, is almost endless.

Yet Christians are told to pray for those in authority to what end and with what goal doesn't say pray that they're saved, pray that they're limited, pray that their excesses will be blunted. It is prayer for the purpose of living a quiet and peaceable life. Lord, whatever goes on in the halls of government and in the smoky, uh, rooms where, you know, backdoor deals are made and influence is peddled and, and corruption and excess are, are committed.

Whatever happens, Lord, the heart of the King is in the hand of the Lord. Lord, we pray that whatever our government does, we can lead a quiet and peaceable life. Quiet and peaceable means I'm not here to demonstrate.

I'm not here to vocally oppose. I'm not here to shake my fist and try to exert pressure and change policies. So many believers and so many people are staking their sense of righteousness on what they support.

I've got a flag from a foreign country that I'm waving. I've got a banner for the children or the women or the, the victims of this and that. And the other, I have to wonder if you go and look at the martyrdom of Christians in Africa by the tens of thousands.

Why has nobody raised a flag and, and made banners and pictures and issues and posts about the believers who are being slaughtered for their faith in other countries, sought out and slain and driven out of their homes, burned out, driven out specifically because they are Christians. Nobody is flogging that cause publicly, but you take people who elected a terrorist government and support those terrorists. And many of those terrorists are their brothers and fathers and sons who even after the, the retribution by Israel still support Hamas as their government by over 75%.

They are the victims and it is righteous for me to support them because victimhood is a virtue. Being a victim is not in and of itself a virtue. I've told you before, one of my favorite quotes of all time is Chet Atkins being interviewed by Guitar Player Magazine back in the seventies and guys like The Who and, and others would, would smash their guitars on stage.

And they asked Chet, what do you think about this trend where guys are getting up there to lighten their guitars on fire? They would pour lighter fluid on them and set them aflame, smash them into the walls and beat them into flinders. They said, what do you

think about this treatment of guitars on stage? And Chet Atkins said, you know, some of those guitars need smashing and some people need to be victimized. Some people need to be held in check and live inside an outdoor prison because if you let them out, what they do is worse.

Look at what happens when they get across a border with guns and knives and opportunity toward women and children and old people. What happens when you let them out? So the fact that they are oppressed is not a virtue. Oppression is not a virtue.

Victimhood is not a virtue. People say, well, I'm a part of a class of oppressed people. Therefore, I am virtuous.

And I will tell you, you can understand about 90% of what's going on in the world today, politically, economically, socially, internationally. You can make a great deal of sense out of everything that is going on. If you just remember this, if we do not find our righteousness in Christ, via the Holy Spirit and the word of God, laying hold of righteousness by faith through God's power, according to God's standards assigned and gifted to us by God.

What was the biggest problem, Paul says, of the Jews in his day and in Jesus' day? Not having the righteousness of God and seeking to establish their own. That's what people are doing. I will identify with a group or a cause that makes me righteous.

I will support the victims in some far off land that makes me righteous. According to my own standard, I'm a good person. And other people who support that consider me to be a good person, and I consider them to be good persons.

And I consider you to be a bad person if you don't support what I support. You don't vote for who I vote for. You don't believe in a cause or a Supreme Court decision that I believe in.

I have virtue, and you don't. And it is self-assigned virtue, and it is a deception. It goes outside the divine order.

That's what Paul is talking about. Adam was not deceived. The woman being deceived fell into transgression.

She thought eating the fruit would enhance her and make her even better. And that is what's going on today. That explains it.

And this is why you can't talk anyone out of it. You can't point out evidence, facts, history. Why? Because to threaten someone's support is to threaten their righteousness.

That's why the Pharisees ensured that Jesus Christ went to the cross, because his teaching invalidated their self-righteousness. Pointed it out. Woe to you, scribes,

Pharisees, hypocrites.

And they turned like swine from the pearls and tore him to pieces. And he knew it, and he allowed it. But we should not think that we're going to convince or change anyone's mind by anything other than a godly life, a godly example, something that shows peace and power, godliness, self-control, a peaceable and quiet life, godliness and reverence, men and women fulfilling responsibilities that are assigned by God, because they are assigned by God.

Not trying to outthink God. I have a better way. I'm better qualified.

I will be seen and appreciated more if I do this. Going outside the divine plan, just read 1 Thessalonians 4 once again, 4.1-12 explains it. Well, this brings us to chapter three and the qualifications for an overseer.

And we will see that these qualities of blamelessness, this is blameless as viewed from the outside. Husband of one wife, we'll talk about this. We've talked about it before.

It is literally a one man woman. In other places, Paul talks about the fact that people who are widowed could and can marry again. The equivalent of being widowed, if someone who is faithless voluntarily departs, you have been widowed.

It wasn't your instigation, it wasn't your initiative, but you end up alone after a marriage because someone is committedly faithless. And this is faithless in the spiritual sense, not stepping outside the marriage for a peccadillo. You don't have to follow someone around with a pair of binoculars and a camera trying to see if they're going to commit adultery or something.

This is someone who has no desire whatsoever to pursue relationship with God by themselves, much less as a couple. And as a result of that, they don't want to be married to this believer anymore. It is a cause of bitterness and disunity and strife and acrimony and creating sin is never God's design in a marriage.

We'll talk about this more next time. There's abundant scripture that explains this. A one-woman man, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, and able to teach.

Teaching in the group takes place from the men. So if there's one thing we take away from this, it is that our life with God, our spiritual life is both a personal and private matter. We can go into our closet and pray.

We can not even dare to raise our eyes to heaven and beat our chest and say, Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner. But we also have a public and visible witness and testimony as believers. And what passes for testimony and witness where I'm going to go tell somebody a bunch of things is not the biblical model.

The biblical model is what does our life look like both inside and outside the group? It matters. Appearances matter. Conformity to the divine order matters.

And it witnesses and it testifies. And those who observe will draw conclusions. God himself will judge.

And there will be recompense if we do or do not value the Word of God and the order and plan and purpose of God enough to follow it. So it's a sober reminder, but we also have the presence and power of the Spirit and the light and guidance of the Word of God to enable us. And if we have failed in the past, we confess it and we change our minds and we start fresh.

God's mercies are renewed every morning. Great is his faithfulness. And whatever has happened in the past, you know, they always say what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas.

What happens in our past when we acknowledge it, recognize it and dedicate ourselves to change of mind away from dead works and operating in faith toward God. The past is the past. We have the chance to start with a clean slate, do what we need to do, praying to God, lifting, stretching out holy hands and adorning ourselves with good works.

We'll see chapter three when we reconvene next week, but we'll close here in a word of prayer. Father, we thank you for these exhortations, the clarity with which they are given, the sense that it makes in terms of your plan and purpose, not only to bless us, but also to provide a light shining in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation so that those who desire relationship with you know where to go. They know where the light is emanating from.

They see where the power and the love and the fruits of the Spirit are in evidence. Those who desire that as a part of relationship with you will be drawn. We pray that our lives can be that drawing influence, that we can represent the Lord Jesus Christ as his body at this time and on this earth, and that in so doing, we will fulfill our divinely ordained purpose and function and prepare ourselves to continue to serve and function in the ages to come.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.