

## 1 Timothy 5B

- As we move forward today in chapter 5, Paul continues to give instruction on preserving the respect and dignity of the believers under Timothy's care
  - We left off in the middle of a discussion of widows in the church
    - This discussion continues tonight
    - But the themes and principles underlying Paul's teaching are universal and somewhat obvious
  - Paul wants Timothy to instill a culture of respect, consideration and honor for all in the body
    - Those in need should receive support without feeling shame
    - Those with means should shoulder the burden of supporting others
    - In short, everyone should operate in a loving manner
  - But it's not loving to place a burden on other believers when you have other options
    - And it's not loving to neglect the financial needs of a family member
    - And it's not loving to accept financial support from the body yet make no effort to thank or bless those who sacrificed for your sake
    - And it's not loving to act in selfish ways and ungodly ways while expecting others to support your selfish lifestyle
- It says a lot about the church in Ephesus that Paul even needed to explain these things to them, and even to Timothy himself
  - At hearing the summary of Paul's teaching, anyone should respond "Well, of course..."
    - The sensibility of Paul's advice seems entirely obvious
    - Yet Paul obviously felt the need to teach these things
  - So we must conclude that the church in Ephesus was immature and even carnal

- Their weaknesses were different in some respect from those in Corinth
- But the church seems to have struggled with attitudes toward wealth, honor and propriety
- And this behavior persisted even after Paul spent years working and ministering in that city
- I suspect this explains why Paul repeated his comment in v.7 to Timothy to prescribe these things
  - It wasn't enough that Timothy know these truths or even that he shared them with the church
    - He needed to make them requirements, rules for behavior
    - Because once they are prescribed, they can be enforced
    - And in cases of violations, Timothy can apply discipline
  - There is a role in the church for prescribing correct behavior and appointing discipline in cases where behavior departs from the rule
    - This isn't legalism; in that these rules aren't mandated as a means of maintaining fellowship with God
    - Instead, we prescribe certain things to maintain good order and fellowship within the body of Christ
    - And obviously, the church needed such guidance to avoid damaging fellowship
- So returning to v.8, we continue in Paul's instructions concerning widows

**1Tim. 5:8** But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

**1Tim. 5:9** A widow is to be put on the list only if she is not less than sixty years old, having been the wife of one man,

**1Tim. 5:10** having a reputation for good works; and if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has assisted those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every good work.

- We remember from last week that some widows in the church were destitute because family members weren't providing for them

- Paul said in v.4 that a widow with family to care for her should seek her support there first
  - He didn't distinguish between believing or unbelieving family members
  - Though I presume if a believing widow has been abandoned by an unbelieving family, then the church would provide support
- The real problem came in cases where a believing widow has been abandoned by a believing family thinking the church would carry the burden
  - In such a case, Paul prescribed that the believing family should be called upon to do the right thing by their widow
  - And now in v.8 he adds a judgment upon those (believing) families that failed to obey this command
- Paul admonishes the one who has responsibility over his "own household" which refers to immediate family members
  - And to "his own" which refers to extended family members under the authority and financial responsibility of the person
  - Obviously, caring for those in your immediate family is a natural expectation
- And in Paul's day, it was also customary for a man to assume responsibility for widowed or orphaned relatives in his extended family
  - Much in the way that Boaz assumed responsibility to care for Naomi
  - So the fact that Paul had to mention this requirement is a bit of a shock and shows how far the church was slipping into unhealthy behaviors
- Paul says those who fail to provide this care are denying the faith and are worse than unbelievers
  - In the context of 1 Timothy and the context of scripture overall, we know Paul is speaking in terms of effect, not reality
    - That is, a person who behaves in such terrible ways are denying the effect of their faith

- Their faith has a purpose in God's economy, and that purpose is ultimately directed to the glory of Christ
- Believers are lights intended to shine our righteousness before Christ, as Jesus said

**Matt. 5:16** "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

- Our "light" is our life of faith lived out, but when we fail to live according to Christ's expectations, we deny faith's purpose
- We deny our own confession by failing to "walk the talk"
- We deny the Lord opportunity to be glorified through our lives
- Keep in mind an unbeliever has no opportunity to do these things
  - One who has no relationship with Christ cannot cast shame upon Him through bad behavior
    - No more than seeing someone else's child throwing a temper tantrum in the grocery store reflects shame upon you
    - A person must first be Christ's, before his or her behavior reflects on Christ
  - That's why Paul says that a believer failing to care for his own family is worse than an unbeliever
    - Paul is speaking of the case where a believer chooses to abdicate their responsibilities while expecting the church body to carry the burden
    - Such behavior was self-evidently unloving to the person's family and to his church family
  - Therefore his behavior was worse than an unbeliever's sins
    - Because unlike the unbeliever, the believer's bad behavior reflects shame on the name of Christ
    - The world will see the Christian's callous behavior toward his own family and may question the meaning and value of a relationship with Christ

- They may wonder what it means that a devotee to this new religion can find reason to neglect even the most basic responsibilities
- As Christians, we need to develop this same thought process to guide our choices and behaviors
  - Are we acting in ways worse than an unbeliever?
  - Even if we do the same things the unbelieving world does, we're worse than unbelievers because our behavior has potential to cast shame on Christ
  - When we apply this standard upon ourselves, we will find ourselves re-evaluating our choices and making different decisions
- So this leads Paul to expand on his earlier list of qualifications for widows receiving support
  - Earlier, Paul said a widow must pass four basic requirements:
    - She must be a believer
    - She must have no other means of support (be a widow indeed)
    - Be willing to serve the church in her spiritual gift
    - Not be living a life of wanton sin while living on support
  - Now in v.9-10 Paul adds three specific tests intended to prevent abuse
    - First, Paul sets an age threshold for being added to the list of dependent widows
    - The age of sixty in ancient times was the age of the elderly
    - It represented an age when men and women were slowing down and less able to provide for themselves
  - Secondly, she must have been the wife of one man
    - This phrase is written in a similar way to the requirement for elders
    - So it implies the same requirement...a woman who lived a moral married life before becoming a widow

- Thirdly, the widow must have a reputation for good works and is willing to devote herself to performing good works on behalf of the church
  - Her reputation would be based on her work as a mother raising up children
  - And on her eagerness to open her home in hospitality to strangers
  - And in selfless works of service to the body of Christ
  - Now she would be called to devote herself to that work for the benefit of the body
- How would we apply these requirements today?
  - The answer is pretty much the way Paul expected
    - A widow in the church expecting support should be someone who is truly in a state of dependence
    - And she is a godly example to the church so that she is perceived as deserving of support
  - These tests are not requirements for individual charity or support
    - So any believer may choose to help a fellow believer without restrictions
    - And James says we should be charitable in that way
    - But when the time comes for the corporate body to support a single member, we do want strict tests to prevent abuse
  - So today we follow Paul's advice by applying his tests in principle, if not always in detail
    - We ask if the need is sincere and justified?
    - Is the recipient worthy in conduct and testimony?
    - And what are reasonable expectations for the recipient to repay the support in service to the body?
- It may feel harsh to set standards like this, since it means we have to say no to some who seek support

- And if you're concerned that the church is being unloving or unkind under these circumstances, then you are forgetting the dangers involved
  - Love is not defined as giving people what they desire
  - Love is defined as doing what's best for someone
  - And giving someone charity they don't warrant is not loving in the least, because it gives opportunity for our sin nature
- Paul mentions this concern in vs.11-13

**1Tim. 5:11** But refuse to put younger widows on the list, for when they feel sensual desires in disregard of Christ, they want to get married,

**1Tim. 5:12** thus incurring condemnation, because they have set aside their previous pledge.

**1Tim. 5:13** At the same time they also learn to be idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention.

- Paul specifically demands that younger widows (under 60) not be put on the list
  - His reason is that when they naturally develop desire for companionship, they would marry and turn aside from serving the church
  - We're coming to understand that the church wasn't truly offering widows charity after all
- In effect, the church was hiring widows as servants to the body of Christ
  - They pledged to serve the body as the body pledged to support them for the rest of their lives
  - But if the church extended this opportunity to younger women, they would be less likely to stick with the pledge
  - In effect, younger women would be pledging disingenuously to serve the church to get support only until a better offer came along
  - Paul said this kind of behavior would bring condemnation upon them from the congregation that pledged to support them

- Furthermore, in the years they wait for that husband to carry them away, they can sit back living a life of idleness knowing they had a church pension
  - And idle hands are the devil's worship, as the saying goes
    - Paul says such women will end up falling victim to their own weaknesses
    - They will fill their idle time in unhealthy ways
  - Paul's concerns for these women expose several important biblical principles for godliness
    - First, to extend charity absent legitimate need is harmful to the individual, not helpful
    - It encourages deception and selfishness born out of greed
  - Secondly, working to support oneself is a healthy and necessary contributor to godliness
    - Conversely, idleness and ease of living is recipe for encouraging the sinful flesh
    - These principles remain true independent of a person's wealth or age
  - Our lives should remain forever engaged in serving the Lord and providing for ourselves as a means of godliness
    - And when we reach later times of life, we simply redirect our time into serving the body of Christ
    - But we are always serving and never idle
- As Paul explains in suggesting the better course for younger widows

**1Tim. 5:14** Therefore, I want younger widows to get married, bear children, keep house, and give the enemy no occasion for reproach;

**1Tim. 5:15** for some have already turned aside to follow Satan.

**1Tim. 5:16** If any woman who is a believer has dependent widows, she must assist them and the church must not be burdened, so that it may assist those who are widows indeed.

- Paul's prescription for younger believing widows may be portrayed as insensitive or even misogynistic by our "enlightened" culture
  - In reality, his advice is both sensible and timeless



- First, he asks that young widows seek to remarry and return to the calling of wife and mother
- These were not lesser roles in society but rather the highest honor of a woman
- His point is that a young widow does not need to give up on her hope in life
  - She can still aspire to the same dreams that she did as a young girl
  - And this approach held the greatest possibility for helping avoid the schemes of the enemy
- Anytime we operate outside the course God has appointed for us, we are operating on the enemy's ground
  - Gender roles have always been flexible to a point, both now and in biblical days
  - But the Lord designed the family and marriage to operate in a certain way according to His purposes and wisdom
  - And the enemy would love nothing better than to see those assignments tossed out the window
- In this case, Paul expected young women to return to the normal aspirations for any woman, which is to marry and raise a family
  - In v.14 Paul adds "keep house"
  - But the term in Greek means to rule over a household
  - Paul is speaking about the duties associated with running the home, which was the woman's area of authority and responsibility
  - It's in keeping with the virtue of the Proverbs 31 woman
- If a young woman resisted remarriage yet continued to burn with desire, as Paul says, she was tempting fate
  - Can she live single without sinning?
    - Probably not, which is Paul's concern

- In fact, Paul says some had turned aside to Satan, which was probably a reference to promiscuity
- Or it may refer to the young women who broke their pledge to the church
- Either way, it reminds us that charity extended under the wrong circumstances is hurtful, not helpful
  - In fact, reserving charity for the most needy and worthy is so important, that even a woman with dependent widows must take care of her own
  - This is the classic Ruth-Naomi situation
  - After Ruth remarried, she was a woman in care of her mother-in-law, Naomi
  - If this situation happened in the church, we would expect a younger woman to care for a widow before the church
  - Because as Paul said, the church must protect its resources to care for those truly in need
- With that, we leave behind the discussion of widows and move to the treatment of elders

**1Tim. 5:17** The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.

**1Tim. 5:18** For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages."

- Based on Paul's comments about widows, it appears the church was too charitable in granting support to one class within the church, namely widows
  - On the other hand, the church was not charitable enough in support toward another class, namely elders
    - The elders in this case are those who rule the church
    - And those who rule well are worthy of double honor, Paul says
    - Paul isn't establishing a scale for judging elder worthiness
    - In Greek it literally reads the "well-ruling elders"
  - So Paul is saying that all faithful elders are deserving of double honor

- The word double isn't a comparison among elders
- It's between elders and non-elders
- That is, the degree of honor we routinely show to brothers and sisters in the church should be "doubled" for our elders
- Specifically, Paul says in v.18 that the honor we show these men should include financial support as needed
  - While the widows were getting unwarranted support, the elders in Ephesus weren't receiving enough support it seems
  - Supporting ministry leaders is a principle Paul echoes elsewhere in his writing, primarily in 1 Corinthians 9
  - Simply put, any man devoted to ruling and teaching the church is worthy of the "double honor" of our financial support
- In v.18 Paul quotes from both Old and New Testament scripture to prove his point, beginning with a quote about oxen taken from Deut 25
  - In Deuteronomy 25:4, we find it written that a farmer in Israel may not muzzle his ox while the ox is threshing
    - Threshing was a process of separating the grain seed from the husk that surrounded it
    - The best way to accomplish this was to lay stalks of grain on a flat hard floor
    - Then a large, heavy animal like an ox would be led to trample over the stalks of grain
    - The grain seeds were strong enough to remain intact under the pressure of the ox hooves
    - But the hooves would separate the chaff away from the grain seed.
  - So the ox would be tied to a pole and made to walk in a circle around the pole
    - The grain stalks would be thrown in the path of the ox
    - While the crushed grain would be swept out of the circle after the ox passed over it

- This process would go on for hours at a time, with the ox moving in a circle around this pole the whole time
- Obviously, the ox would get hungry after working for so long
  - So occasionally the ox might stop and bend down to eat some of the grain under it's feet
  - If a farmer wanted to prevent the ox from eating the grain, he could place a muzzle on the mouth of the ox
  - But in the Law, the Lord commanded that the sons of Israel not muzzle the ox while it was threshing
- The Lord's chief concern in Deut 25 wasn't for the welfare of oxen
  - It was for the sake of His people
    - First, it was beneficial to the farmer that his ox was well-fed and strong while it performed the work
    - The little bit of grain the animal might eat provided the energy needed for that animal to thresh the grain for the farmer
    - If the animal was weak, the grain wouldn't be harvested
    - So to starve the animal in the hope of saving a little grain was penny wise and pound foolish, as the saying goes
  - More importantly, Paul says in 1 Cor. 9 that this law was always intended to be a useful illustration concerning supporting ministers
    - Like the ox, a workman should expect to give his work in the hope of receiving something of benefit in return
    - Workmen share in what they work to produce, just as the ox shared in the grain it helped to glean
    - It's not a burden; it's their right
- Then Paul quotes a second scripture in saying a "laborer is worthy of his wages"
  - It's possible Paul was quoting Jesus directly, from His statement to the disciples in Matthew 10
    - If so, then this would be the earliest known verification of one New Testament book by another as scripture

- Or it could have been a common saying in the day that both Jesus and Paul quoted
- Either way, it verifies the same truth
  - When someone does labor on our behalf, we have a moral obligation to compensate them for that work
  - If we follow this rule without exception for the sake of day laborers and handymen who build things, that will perish one day
  - Then how much more so for the sake of those who serve us spiritually, with eternal things that will never perish?
- So those who rule and teach in the church should be given utmost respect and honor in keeping with the difficulty and importance of their role
  - They have a tough job in guarding the souls in the church
    - They wrestle with our sin even when we don't
    - They clean up the messes we create in our lives, or in others'
    - They encourage us, guide us, counsel us
    - So we should honor them for doing the most important work in the church
  - Moreover, those who work hard at teaching and preaching to the congregation are especially worthy of our honor
    - The reason simply reflects the importance of the word itself
    - Understanding scripture is the key that unlocks a life of godliness that pleases the Lord
    - It shows us how much the Lord values His word
  - Of course, Paul adds that those deserving of our honor are those actually serving in their role as they should (i.e., "well" and "work hard")
    - A pastor or elder who operates beneath his office is not worthy of honor at all
    - A teacher who lacks diligence or care in handling God's word is not to be honored in the least

- Or an elder who doesn't guard the flock or abuses his power is unworthy of any honor
- Speaking of misbehaving elders, Paul moves to that topic

**1Tim. 5:19** Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses.

**1Tim. 5:20** Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning.

- In keeping with his teaching on showing "double honor," Paul begins by warning the congregation against undermining its leaders
  - The church is not like other institutions where leaders come and go at the whims of people
  - An elder is a person assigned responsibility by the Spirit of God, and as such we must take caution when entertaining accusations
  - In short, we don't act on them unless we have probable cause
- In the Law given to Israel, the basis for probable cause was a plurality of witnesses willing to testify to the same thing
  - So two or three witnesses were required
  - One witness wasn't probable cause because one person's testimony wasn't deemed trustworthy or conclusive
  - Yet more than three witnesses was seen as a conspiracy
- Today, our standards might differ, but the principle is the same
  - We want good evidence to support an accusation before we move forward
  - Because even an investigation brings the possibility of ruining a man's reputation
  - And we don't want to take that risk unless warranted
- Furthermore, an elder's role will necessitate making difficult decisions, including taking action against misbehaving church members
  - So it's a position likely to make enemies in the body of Christ
  - Furthermore, we expect the enemy to take shots at our leaders

- So we must protect them from false accusations even as we hold them to high standards
- But of course, some will fall to temptation and sin, and those who do so must be corrected
  - Notice that Paul moves directly to elders who “continue” in sin
    - Naturally, Paul skips over what to do in the first case that an accusation of sin is verified
    - I say naturally because all elders sin
    - So the presence of sin in the lives of elders is not a surprise
    - Nor is it in itself cause for dismissal, though some forms of sin may be so serious as to warrant severe responses
  - But in general, we know our elders and teachers will err, but the test is how do they handle correction?
    - Jesus Himself gave us the proper pattern for correcting sinning brothers and sisters in Matthew 18
    - If we follow these steps with an elder and he repents, then the case is closed
  - But Paul says if an elder continues in sin, then he is to be rebuked publicly before the whole church
    - This step is the next-to-last response to sin that Jesus gave us in His graduated scale (Matt 18:17)
    - So Paul isn’t inventing a new system of discipline
    - He’s simply applying Jesus’ teaching without exception
  - And that’s Paul’s point... an elder who serves properly (i.e., well) is worthy of great honor, but an unrepentant sinning elder gets the same rebuke as the rest of us
    - We don’t hold back in our approach to sin no matter who is guilty
    - It’s not inconsistent to honor some above others while holding everyone to the same standards

- In fact, Paul adds that rebuking an elder just as we would any sinning member of the body works to promote godliness among all
  - It will cause the rest to become fearful of sinning
  - We will see that no one is above rebuke if we choose to sin against the word of God
- Paul continues in the vein of partiality in v.21

**1Tim. 5:21** 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 issues his strongest charge to Timothy; reinforcing the need for impartiality
  - Paul invokes the presence of God, Christ and the (elect) angels to support his charge
  - Elect angels refers to the non-fallen angels, those who did not follow Satan and become demons
- By invoking these in his charge, Paul was stressing that any failure to comply with this charge would be known in Heaven and judged there
  - In other words, a pastor or elder who rules with partiality is going to hear about it at his judgment
  - Partiality goes both ways
  - A pastor or elder can be partial in giving too much favor to some over others
  - And he can be partial by refraining from correcting some as strictly as he does others
- Having just asked Timothy to set rules for widows and elders, he emphasizes that Timothy can't apply these rules selectively
  - This kind of favoritism was a chief sin of the Pharisees in Jesus' day
  - They loved money, the Bible says, so they sold their favor to the highest bidder



- You remember Jesus' reaction to men who placed money above God
- He ran the money changers out of the temple with a whip
- Imagine what He has in store for men who curry favor by showing bias in the church?
- And the fear of elders gone wild leads Paul into the next thought in v.22

**1Tim. 5:22** Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin.

- To lay hands means to confirm the spiritual authority of a leader as determined by the Holy Spirit
  - Ultimately, the decision to assign leadership authority to a man in the church is not a decision made by men
  - It's a decision God makes
  - So laying on hands is a human way of acknowledging something God has already done
- The trick of course is knowing that the Spirit is moving in this way in a particular man's life
  - And the best way to know this is simply to wait and watch
  - Time will reveal the will of God
- Therefore, Paul says don't lay on hands too hastily
  - The word translated hastily is simply the Greek word for "too soon"
  - If we move before God does, we are elevating men into a leadership position God Himself didn't intend
  - That elevation will lead to a man working outside the Spirit and therefore in weakness of his flesh
  - That's a recipe for all kinds of problems in the church, including poor instruction, poor direction and scandal
- If a leader makes this mistake, Paul says that leader will share responsibility for the sins of others

- Sharing responsibility means taking on the consequences of that elder's sins
  - For example, when a man who has been prematurely raised into leadership teaches wrongly, those who ordained him share responsibility for the consequences of the false teaching
  - Or for the consequences of his poor counsel or ungodly direction
  - All these sins will have consequences in the lives of the church, and God will hold accountable those who raise up false leaders
  - And to an extent, they will share in the condemnation
- Therefore, Timothy must be very careful in exercising this rite of the church
  - Better to delay an ordination than rush it
  - After all, a man seeking to be an overseer can still perform many acts of ministry to the body even without ordination
  - In fact, if he will only be satisfied by ordination, that's a warning sign in itself
  - For laying on of hands in the church comes with significant burdens no one should accept lightly
  - And true selfless dedication to serving God doesn't place undue emphasis on such things
- At this point, it's easy to imagine Timothy's reaction as he read Paul's letter for the first time
  - Here's a young pastor of questionable pedigree receiving instruction on how to say no to begging widows, discipline older elders and refuse to confirm others
    - He must have felt the ulcers forming even as he was reading
    - Ministering is difficult enough, but now Paul is asking Timothy to tackle some of the most difficult challenges of church life
    - The only topic more volatile would have been a discussion of worship music style
  - So appropriately, Paul inserts a little helpful advice to Timothy in v.23

**1Tim. 5:23** No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.

- I've long suspected that pastoral ministry can lead a man to drink, but now we have biblical support for that notion
  - Paul advises Timothy to strengthen himself for the difficult conversations ahead by including a little wine in his diet
    - To be clear, Paul is prescribing an alcoholic beverage, albeit in moderation and for health purposes
    - For any who might have heard that "wine" in the New Testament is not actually a fermented drink, let me assure you that is not correct
  - Throughout the Old and New Testament, references to wine are always references to the fermented drink, not to unfermented juice
    - In both Hebrew and Greek, the Bible uses different words for grape juice than for wine
    - For example, in Numbers we find both words used together in the same context:

**Num. 6:3** he shall abstain from wine and strong drink; he shall drink no vinegar, whether made from wine or strong drink, nor shall he drink any grape juice nor eat fresh or dried grapes.

- In this verse we find the word "wine" used in the first half of the verse, while "grape juice" is used in the second half of the verse
  - The words "wine" and "grape juice" are different Hebrew words with different meanings
  - One refers to an alcoholic drink (wine), while the other refers to a nonalcoholic drink (grape juice)
  - Therefore, we can see that the Bible uses the word "wine" to mean something other than grape juice.
- Secondly, in the New Testament we find further proof that the word wine refers to an alcoholic beverage
  - In the story of the wedding in Cana, the headwaiter compliments the bridegroom on serving high quality wine near the end of the celebration:

**John 2:9** When the headwaiter tasted the water which had become wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom,

**John 2:10** and said to him, "Every man serves the good wine first, and when the people have drunk freely, then he serves the poorer wine; but you have kept the good wine until now."

- The tradition at parties is to serve the best wine first, when the drinkers are still thinking clearly and can discern the difference in quality
- Once the attendees have had a few drinks, the host brings out the poorer quality (i.e., less expensive) wine
- Because few will notice or remember the difference after the effects of the alcohol dull their judgment.
- In John 2, the headwaiter at the wedding was pleasantly surprised to discover that the new wine was the better wine (because it was the product of Jesus' miracle)
  - By the circumstances and the nature of his remark, we must conclude that the "wine" in this story was the alcoholic drink, not merely unfermented grape juice
  - No guest would have reason to notice differences in the quality of unfermented grape juice (all grape juice is the same)
  - Nor would a host have any reason to hold back "better" grape juice for later in the evening
  - Only alcoholic wine varies in quality in the way the story suggests
  - Undoubtedly, the headwaiter was impressed by Jesus' wine-making skills, not His juice-making skills.
- Furthermore, in ancient times it was virtually impossible to store unfermented grape juice
  - Without refrigeration or preservatives, grape juice quickly sours and becomes rancid
    - So in Jesus' day, the safe way to store grape juice was to ferment it

- Because the alcohol in the wine prevented the juice from spoiling
- This is why Jews often cut their wine with water to diminish the alcoholic effect, allowing them to drink more juice without becoming drunk.
- Wide spread storage of unfermented grape juice did not become a reality until Thomas Welch invented the pasteurizing of grape juice in 1869
  - Ironically, Welch was a Methodist minister opposed to Christians drinking alcohol
  - Which motivated his research into ways of preserving unfermented grape juice
  - He was searching for a way to store nonalcoholic grape juice for use in the communion celebration
  - Until his invention, most churches had little choice but to use alcoholic wine in the Lord's Supper observance
- So, Paul is in fact telling Timothy to drink wine, which debunks legalistic views that believe even moderate consumption of wine is a sin. (It isn't)
  - Interestingly, Paul's instructions imply that Timothy drank nothing beforehand
    - In a time and culture when drinking wine was as common as drinking coffee today, it's odd that Timothy was a tee-totaler
    - It could have been merely personal preference
    - But if so, it's hard to think Paul would have recommended behavior contrary to Timothy's conscience
  - So more likely Paul knew Timothy abstained for some spiritual benefit
    - Perhaps to set an example of moderation to a culture taken away by various excesses
    - But now apparently, that lesson has been learned and a higher priority took precedence
- Which brings us to the final and most intriguing part of Paul's recommendation

- It appears Paul knew (by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit) that there were health benefits to be gained for Timothy by drinking a little wine
  - Paul refers to Timothy's stomach, which suggests digestive concerns
  - Perhaps the mild antiseptic effect of alcohol in the digestive tract would counteract pathogens in his water or food
  - Perhaps it was to settle and relax an overly anxious or nervous Timothy
- But notice the effect required only a "little" wine
  - Paul's caution was to use the wine in moderation
  - Clearly, wine can be good for us, but like any good thing, it must be used appropriately
- Lastly, Paul gives Timothy a final piece of encouragement to be patient before choosing leaders

**1Tim. 5:24** The sins of some men are quite evident, going before them to judgment; for others, their sins follow after.

**1Tim. 5:25** Likewise also, deeds that are good are quite evident, and those which are otherwise cannot be concealed.

- Some men will wear their sins on their sleeves
  - Their preferred sins are more obvious, overt
    - They are impulsive, rude, carnal, etc.
    - These men are quite evident, so we have little fear of elevating them prematurely
    - They will disqualify themselves soon enough
    - And Paul says their sins "go before them" into judgment, meaning we all know more or less what their judgment will be like
  - Others' sinful deeds are concealed from our view, though God knows them
    - These men will only show their true nature to us given enough time and if we get to know them well enough

- In the end, their sin cannot be concealed, either because time or the Spirit will make them known
- Similarly, good deeds will be seen for what they are in time
  - So as we evaluate men for eldership, study them from both angles
  - And in that way we come to appreciate where the Lord is at work so we may confirm His choices