

1 Timothy 5:1-25 - Restoring Honour in a World of Shame

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[0 : 00] He has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than 60 years old,¹ Besides that, they learn to be idlers going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies saying what they should not.

So I'd have younger women marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander. For some have already strayed after Satan.

If any believe in women as relatives who are widows, let them care for them. Let the church not be burdened, so that it may care for those who are truly widows. Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in preaching and teaching.

For the scripture says, You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain, and the labourer deserves his wages. Do not admit a charge against an elder, except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear.

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels, I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality. Do not be hasty in laying on of hands, nor take part in the sins of others.

[1 : 37] Keep yourself pure. No longer drink only wine, but use a little wine, excuse me, no longer only drink water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.

The sins of some people are conspicuous, going before them to judgment. But the sins of others appear later. So also good works are conspicuous, and even those that are not cannot remain hidden.

Let all who are under a yoke of bond servants, as bond servants, regard their own masters as worthy of all honour, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled.

Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the grounds that they are brothers. Rather, they must serve all the better, since those who benefit by their good service are believers and beloved.

Teach and urge these things. Let's pray. Father, as we open your word, Lord, we thank you, Lord, that you are not a distant teacher giving us information, but you are a risen king, inviting us to transformation.

[2 : 39] Lord, and that is what we desire this morning, and so we pray. Lord, it's so easy for our hearts to be distracted. Lord, it's so easy for us to chase approval or performance or any other thing. Lord, and so we pray.

Lord, we ask that your spirit, by your spirit, you would quench our fears and awaken our faith. By the reading of your word, by the studying of your word, Lord, I pray that your spirit would make it alive to us.

In Jesus' name. Amen. If you were to trace the story of the Bible in one short phrase, you could say it's the story of honour given, honour lost, and honour restored.

In the beginning, in Genesis chapter 2, we read about how honour was given. Adam and Eve didn't earn value when they were created.

They were created with it. They were given worth, value, honour. They were image bearers of God without sin.

[3 : 48] Genesis chapter 1 says that God said, let us make man in our image after our likeness. Their value was not in what they could do or what they did, but in the God that they belonged to.

The value that they had came from that perfect union, that perfect community, that perfect relationship with God. And you know the story then, the very next chapter all goes wrong.

And in Genesis chapter 3, we see honour lost. And with it, a lie that still runs deep in every human heart.

And the lie was essentially about value. It was about rejecting the God who gives value, who gives worth to humanity.

What we see in Genesis chapter 3, as the result of rejecting God, Adam and Eve are then separated from God. That perfect communion relationship, unity is gone.

[4 : 51] And so with that, the value that they have in God is also gone. No longer could they experience that value of themselves.

But what they did experience instead was, you might argue, the opposite of value and worth. And that's the word shame. Shame is the emotion that says, I'm not worth enough.

And they experienced it because they weren't in right relationship with God, the one who gives us worth and value. And the action that we see as a result of Adam and Eve discovering this is there in verse 7.

It says that, when both of their eyes were opened, they knew that they were naked and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. So they tried to cover themselves, which means that the value that we once got from relationship with God, now lost, has to be made up from something else.

Or someone else. And so we make up our value from achievement, appearance, wealth, morality, just to name four.

[6 : 14] Whatever we think will prove our worth apart from God. And so achievement says, I'll earn my worth.

We chase productivity, we chase success, we chase certificates and degrees, we chase promotions, anything that says, I'm not just here, I'm significant.

We fill our calendars with stuff because stillness feels like worthlessness. We think, if I can just accomplish enough, I'll be enough.

And of course, you know, the problem is that achievement never satisfies. It just raises the bar. You know that if you're in a career. You do one thing, they expect more of you.

You do that other thing, they expect more of you. Am I just teaching like, am I talking like a teacher? You hit the goal and suddenly there's a new one. Or your boss pivots and there's something, some other goals you should have done but you haven't done because they didn't tell you.

[7 : 26] And you can achieve everything. And you can still hear that small inner voice that says, yeah, but who are you without it? Well, it may not be achievement for you.

It may not be achievement at all. It may be appearance. Appearance says, I'll display my worth. And of course, we live in a world that is like that.

I mean, just, this is not an encouragement but you can just jump onto social media and appearance seems to be everything. I was even reading this week of a new trend among young women not to photograph them with their boyfriend simply because they don't want the world to know that they are reliant on a man.

It's an image. It's appearance. This is the work to look valuable through how we present ourselves, how we are perceived, the images that we create for some.

That's literal appearance in terms of fitness and style and beauty. For others, it's the appearance of having it all together, a polished family, a perfect Instagram life, the calm exterior hiding quiet panic.

[8 : 48] We don't just have fig leaves, we decorate them. But no matter how much we polish the outside, shame always finds a crack to whisper through if they really saw you, they'd walk away.

Value, worth. For you, it may not be achievement or appearance. Maybe it's wealth. Wealth says, I'll secure my worth. We surround ourselves with things that signal success, don't we?

They're not success, they just signal success. Money becomes a tool and more than that, it becomes armor. If I have enough, maybe I'll feel safe. If I can afford what others admire, maybe I'll be admired too.

But wealth can't cover shame, it's just fig leaves but more expensive. And the more we build our identity around possessions, that actually the more fragile we become because anything that can be lost can't be your value.

The other way we try and gain value apart from God is through morality, which says, I'll deserve my worth. And here's the sneaky one. This is the sneaky one because this is church language.

[10 : 04] We try to make up our value deficit by being good, by obeying, by serving, by comparing. And I'm not for one moment saying that you shouldn't obey the Lord, just for the record.

But we do think, it's easy to think, if I'm better than others, maybe I'll be acceptable. But it's just another fig leaf. And this time, it's just made out of religion.

It's still self-salvation. It's still an attempt to earn the worth that only can be received as a gift from God in right relationship with God. And so the problem is, is that the value humanity once got from relationship with God intrinsically being created by God in His image is now lost.

And we spend our lives making up the deficit with things that think will give us value. Now, of course, in the ancient world, people did that through what is known as the honor-shame system.

And, you know, your value and your worth depended on your name, your reputation, and your place in the social order. And we've seen a little bit of that this week, haven't we, with the whole debacle with Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor, right?

[11 : 25] No longer Prince. That's working from an honor-shame system. And actually, it's still the case in many, many places in the world.

In the West, we don't really have that kind of culture, the honor-shame system. Not really. Our prevailing culture is through achievement. It's through merit.

We've talked about meritocracy before. Your worth depends on how successful, productive, or impressive you can be. And so, in chapter 3, we then see the stunning grace of God being presented with humanity that has no value, apart from God, has no value, or little value, I probably should say more correctly.

When Adam and Eve hide and seek to cover their value deficit, God comes looking. He doesn't leave them in disgrace.

In chapter 3, verse 9, we begin to see honor restored. As God starts working to bring back relationship, and by bringing back relationship and communion, therefore, for value, worth, and honor.

[12 : 45] There in chapter 9, excuse me, verse 9, we read that the Lord God called to the man and said to him, where are you? Not because he doesn't know their location.

This wasn't a deficit that God had. He didn't like, where are you? I don't know where you are. But because he wants them to know that they're separated. There's distance.

And in verse 21, it says that the Lord God made for Adam and his wife garments of skins and clothed them. A small tender act that foreshadows something still greater to come.

Even in their shame, God gives them dignity. He gives them honor. And that's what it means to honor. It means to give value to.

That's what that word means. To give value to. To give worth to. And so to bear God's image is to reflect his value.

[13 : 42] To honor others is to recognize that reflection in them. And nowhere do we see this, of course, more vividly in Jesus.

Right? Jesus entered the world and it was a world obsessed, first century, obsessed with honor and rank. and what does he do? Turns it upside down.

He touches lepers. Shouldn't be doing that. He eats with sinners. Shouldn't be doing that either. He speaks to outcasts.

Draws them near. He gave value to the ones everyone else said were worthless. In Luke chapter 4, he quotes actually from Isaiah 61.

And Isaiah 61 is about a prophecy about Messiah coming. And it's about preaching liberty to the captives, you'll know well, healing the broken hearted, delivering the spiritually oppressed.

[14 : 43] And all of that is fulfilled. He says, now this is fulfilled in my coming. Right? And what you read, and we often stop there, but what you read in the rest of the prophecy is this partial fulfillment that Jesus brings where Isaiah says in verse 7, instead of your shame, instead of your value deficit, instead of your worthlessness, so instead of your shame, there shall be a double portion.

Instead of dishonor, they shall rejoice in their lot. Therefore, in their land, they shall possess a double portion, they shall have everlasting joy.

And look, while that's speaking about Israel and the millennial reign, I get that, but the overall point is that when Jesus came, one of the reasons for his coming was to restore that which was lost.

Value and worth because of connection and right relationship to God. And so he came. You think about just how Jesus came. Was it with honor or dishonor?

Total dishonor. I mean, he's the king of the universe, and he comes in human form. And then he's placed in a manger. And get out of your mind the pretty little wooden boxes with nice clean straw in that we see in the nativity scenes.

[16 : 08] Not that. This is an animal feeding trough in some dark alley in Bethlehem. Dishonor. And then of all places, have you ever thought about this?

Of all places, Joseph flees with his family, is Egypt. Like, if you know your Bible, that's dishonor. That the Messiah would flee to Egypt, of all places, dishonor.

Like, his whole life, you could argue, the whole life of Jesus was one of perceptual shame. He didn't have a house.

house. He didn't have a home, but he didn't have a place to lay his head. And then his friends betray him.

And do you know the value that they put on him? 30 pieces of silver. Ever thought about why the 30 pieces of silver? It's value, it's worth. They were saying, this is how much you're worth.

[17 : 14] death. And then he goes to the cross, the most shameful death imaginable in the ancient world. Not just execution, but public humiliation.

Hebrews 12 says that he endured the cross and despised the shame. And then Paul tells us how Jesus' resurrection is the ultimate reversal of that shame.

Right? So Paul says in Philippians chapter 2 he says therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every other name so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

That's a reversal. And so in the coming to earth and going to the cross and rising from the grave and ascending to the right hand of the Father he stripped shame of its power.

Where we can say you know what I'm not worth anything but in Christ I'm worth everything. He was so shamed so that we could be honoured.

[18 : 30] He was so exposed so that we might be covered. He was rejected so that we could be adopted. And we should let that sink in. That the king of glory the most valued and valuable one in all eternity bore my shame so that I could walk in honour.

Now I know underneath so many of us carry the same ache that Adam and Eve felt. I'm not enough. I'm exposed. I need to hide. I need to cover.

And maybe you do know that feeling. Maybe you do know that low hum of not really measuring up. Maybe you carry shame from someone, something done by you or something done to you.

But the good news of the gospel is that God's first move towards shame is not your rejection. God's first move is redemption.

He doesn't say fix it. He says come out of hiding. He doesn't only forgive your sins. He gives you back your value as you are connected to him.

[19 : 46] And that's what Paul is doing here in 1st Timothy 5. And I know you were questioning when we're ever going to get into the text. He's showing the church, he's showing us how we live as people who have had their honor restored.

are people who no longer measure worth by age or gender or status or performance but who give value to one another the way God gives value to them.

And so look at verse 1 and 2. Paul talks about family honor. He says do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you were the father. Younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters in all purity.

He's describing what redeemed honor looks like. He's saying Timothy remember the church isn't a corporation, it's a family and in God's family you don't measure people by their usefulness.

You give them the value because they belong to Christ. And notice look how tender Paul's words are. Older men are not obstacles to out argue their fathers to respect.

[21 : 05] Younger men aren't rivals, they're brothers to encourage. Older women aren't irrelevant, they're mothers to learn from. Younger women aren't objects of desire, they're sisters to protect with absolute purity, Paul says.

Every relationship comes from an opportunity to look at another person and say you matter no matter what you do but because of who you are in Christ.

And if Christ thinks you're valuable I should give you honour. Which is exactly what God did for us, right? He gave us value when we had none.

He honoured us when we were hiding in shame. And so the way that we treat one another in church is meant to mirror that grace. Which means speaking to one another in truth without humiliation.

Like do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father. Means cultivating purity. Especially across gender lines. Not because you're afraid of scandal.

[22 : 11] Like well you should be afraid of scandal but because you value the other person as a sibling not an object. Means being intentional about belonging.

Asking who in this community, in our church community is unseen, unheard and unvalued. And how can I give them value? And Paul moves on to write about honour for the vulnerable in verse three.

So honour for the family, honour for the vulnerable. Honour again literally means to give value to, verse three, honour widows who are truly widows.

Right? So again in the ancient world widows were often invisible. And you know a woman's security was really based on her husband or her sons.

And no husband meant no income, it meant no inheritance, it meant no legal standing, often it meant no future. They were shamed of society, pitied, yes, but powerless.

[23 : 14] And into that world, Paul says to Timothy, give them price, give them weight, give them dignity, give them value. charity. The church must become a place where those, where the world ignores the church sees and values.

And look, this command isn't new, is it? Hey, Paul hasn't just made this up for a century, like, I've got a bright idea. Throughout the Bible, God is the defender of the widow, defender of the orphan, defender of the stranger, the one society calls worthless.

Like in Deuteronomy chapter 10 verse 18, God is described as the one who executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing.

That's what God does. In Psalm 68 verse 5, God is called the father of the fatherless and protector of widows. But also notice that Paul says, don't help them in discriminately.

He says, honor widows who are truly widows. And then in verse 4 and 5, he outlines the qualifications for a true widow. If a widow has children or grandchildren, let them, and look, I think the them there is referring to the children or grandchildren.

[24 : 41] Because he then goes on to say, let them learn first or first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents. So it's the children and the grandchildren now returning favor, they're returning care, they're returning goodness to their parents or grandparents.

And that is pleasing in the sight of God. And so Paul is saying, look, you're not a vulnerable widow if your children or grandchildren are treating you with the godliness you deserve.

you deserve. And so he's saying, look, it's family's responsibility. But Paul knows that's not always the case.

So he says in verse 5, she who is truly a widow, left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prays night and day. But she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she's alive, command these things as well so that they may be without reproach.

So no one can point the finger is the idea. But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, so here's the thing about the children and the grandchildren, if you don't provide for your relatives and especially for members of his own household, he is denied the faith and worse than an unbeliever.

[25 : 59] He says, let a woman be enrolled. And I think, look, this next part is I think clearly about some situation that is probably going on in Ephesus, right? Some enrollment program that they kind of rolled out for widows, right?

And so he addresses that. He says, let a woman be enrolled if she is not less than 60 years old. Having been the wife of one husband and having a reputation, so there's a qualification, there's a list that they are to work by.

They have a reputation for good works. If she has brought up children and shown hospitality and washed the feet of saints and cared for the afflicted and devoted herself to good works. So this isn't just like a payout.

This is, there are some widows who are truly in need and some widows who are truly godly, help them, show them respect, show them honor. And he says in verse 11, refuse to enroll younger widows, presumably under 60.

So if you're under 60, you're young. That's what it's saying, I think. Don't take that from me, that's the Bible. Okay? So you can quote that anytime you like.

[27 : 17] You're older if you're over 60, but not old. Correct. So refuse to enroll younger widows for when their passions draw away from them, draw them away from Christ their desire to marry and so incur condemnation for having abandoned a form and faith.

And so I think clearly this is mostly about some kind of situation that Paul is addressing in Ephesus 2 Timothy. Paul is basically saying, look, just be wise about who and how you help.

Besides that, verse 13, he says, they learned to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not.

Look, I mean, what Paul is not saying is that if you're under 60 and a widow, you must be a busybody and an idler. He's not saying that. He's just saying, look, in Ephesus, there seems to be an issue of a whole bunch of people claiming what they should probably not claim, and that's become a problem for the church, and Timothy is some wise counsel on how to deal with that.

So he says, I would have younger women marry and bear children, manage their households, give the adversary no occasion for slander, for some have already strayed to Satan, after Satan.

[28 : 38] Harsh words, right? If any believing woman has relatives who are widows, let them care for them, let the church not be burdened so that it may care for those who are truly widows.

And so the question you probably should ask is why so much detail about who is a widow and who isn't, right? And I think simply because it's that real honor is both generous but it's also wise.

It's compassionate but it has to have some order about it. The church's goal here is not just to hand out resources, it's to restore dignity. And you'll know as well as I do if you've ever been in contact or worked anywhere in kind of social work or anything like that, actually handing out stuff does not restore dignity.

It actually works the opposite way. And so what Paul is saying is look, yes help people but make sure it's to the end of restoring their dignity, giving them value and that requires both grace and discernment.

And I think there's a modern parallel to this. You know, I don't think it's just that because we don't see a huge amount of vulnerable widows these days that we can just forget about restoring dignity, right?

[29 : 55] we can't just gloss over this and go, well, clearly that doesn't apply to us. Because I think there's plenty of opportunities where there are vulnerable people where the church can help.

So single parents carrying more than they can bear is a prime example. Elderly believers who feel forgotten. We talk about refugees quite frequently but refugees are in that category, disabled who are in that category.

And to honor them means to give them value, to give them the value that they can find in God. To look them in the eye and let them know that they are seen and known.

But Paul doesn't stop there because if the church is to be a family of honor, it's, you know what it means where a preacher checks his watch? Nothing.

If the church is to be a family of honor, it must also, it must be a place that gives value to the vulnerable, the question would be well how do you do that? Like how do you practically do that?

[31 : 04] And of course there's many things that you could get involved in in our city, absolutely. But listen, just a few things I think are coming on the screen that you might want to think about. You know, we honor people with our attention, don't we?

I mean you think about how busy we all are. Like how's your week been? I've been busy. I mean it's almost a standard response, right? By listening to those that the world overlooks, like some people, all people want is to be heard sometimes.

You know, you go on the phone to someone and it's an hour later and they've just been talking. You're giving them your attention. It might be your presence.

You might be with them. Sometimes just going for coffee with them is going to be the highlight of their week. Sometimes all people want to feel is less lonely, right?

Honor with our resources, absolutely. Be generous. The gospel never hoards value, it gives it away. Be honor with our inclusion, making spaces for the unseen in our circles, in our conversations, inviting people in to those conversations because the gospel expands the family of God and so should we.

[32 : 23] And so who are we inviting in rather than excluding? And then Paul kind of goes on in verse 17 and he says that we must guard the value of the gospel through integrity and leadership.

So he expands this now to saying, let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching, and teaching.

The phrase double honor has been misused in some context of Christianity, right? And maybe you've seen the videos, maybe you've been part of a church that has made this a big thing.

It doesn't mean that the leaders who are preaching and teaching should get twice as much pay. Okay? That's not what it means. It's often translated or interpreted that way, but it doesn't mean that.

It actually means two-fold honor. Okay? So it's the word two-fold is the word double. And we think, oh, double is one plus one is two.

[33 : 29] That's double. But it doesn't mean necessarily that. It means, I'm going to get my maths wrong. Look, I'll just take it from the Bible. Look, the preceding phrase is considered worthy.

That word worthy is axios. And it just means to balance the scale. Now, we all know that. Like, if you have an electronic one, it doesn't. It doesn't make any sense whatsoever. But old-school scale, all right?

You have two sides. Got it? And to consider something worthy is to balance that scale, right? And so what Paul is saying is that you have two sides.

This isn't a call for twice as much of one thing over another thing. He's saying, look, there's two separate things. They need to be balanced. Does that make sense? So he's calling for equal honor of two separate things, not twice as much of one thing, right?

And so he tells us what these things are then in verse 18. For the scripture says, so for the scripture, okay, so this is an explanation of what he's just said.

[34 : 37] And then he quotes from, I want to say, Deuteronomy and Leviticus, our favorite books, right? He says, you shall not muzzle an ox.

Like, that's what leaders are. That's what, that's how a high the Bible thinks leaders. They're just oxes. You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain.

One side of the balance. Secondly, a laborer deserves his wages. That's the other side of the balance. This is not twice as much as the same thing. Both are illustrations and they appeal to God's justice and care for those who work.

You value leaders by how you regard them relationally and how you treat them materially. make sense? Treat them with respect.

Encourage them publicly. Defend them privately from unwanted or unwarranted criticism. Pay them fairly. Provide for their families. Ensure they can focus on their ministry.

[35 : 51] Failing either dimension undermines what God thinks about justice and care. So it's not twice as much of one thing. It's one thing of one and one thing of another so they're balanced.

And then immediately after this, Paul almost says, I must add this, I must add this, I know there's going to be some confusion. So verse 19, do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses.

As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all so that the rest may stand in fear. In other words, honor isn't the same as blind loyalty. It's not pretending leaders are flawless.

It's about protecting integrity without creating immunity. And we see that often, don't we? We've seen this in big organizations over the last few years where there's immunity.

Paul wants a church culture where leaders are respected, not idolized, accountable, not disposable. Because both extremes, celebrity and cynicism, distort the gospel.

[37 : 02] Then he says in verse 21, let's wrap this up, in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and all the elect angels, interesting phrase, most likely those angels who stayed true to God in the first original angelic rebellion.

That's a whole different Bible study. I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality. Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor take part in the sins of others.

Keep yourself pure. No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments. The sins of some people are conspicuous, going before them to judgment, and the sins of others appear later.

So also, good works are conspicuous and even those that are not cannot remain hidden. And so, not only leaders in the church that Paul is concerned with, but here in the first two verses of then chapter six, he mentions how bond servants are to honor their masters, which are all kinds of problems depending on what version of the Bible you're reading.

right? It's worth saying that in the first century, in first century society, slaves were a tool, not a person. And actually, it wasn't so long ago, even in this country, that that was true.

[38 : 21] That people are a tool for something rather than a person. In fact, Aristotle, his teaching on ethics, he wrote this. He said that a slave is a living tool, just as a tool is an inanimate slave.

That's Aristotle. Under Roman law, according to Gaius, a slave was a thing to be bought and sold, not a legal person.

However, verse one's not talking about slaves. It's talking, if you want to do your homework, Exodus 21, it's talking about a bond servant.

This is a voluntary servant who has got into debt and the way to pay that debt off is then to go and work for that person. Right?

So Exodus 21 lays out the rules for that. You know, they need a car, so they borrow some money for the car, then they get sick and they can't repay. When they get well again, they go back to the person they bought the car from and go, you know, I haven't got the money, but I can work for you for a month.

[39 : 28] That's a bond servant. Okay? It's not the same as slavery as we would describe slavery. And so when Paul says, let all who are under the yoke as bond servants, *doulos* is the word.

So rather than slavery, we're talking about someone who has gotten into debt and has to work to pay it off. And Paul is saying these people are particularly vulnerable.

And they're vulnerable to abuse and they're vulnerable to being dishonored. And so Paul says, okay, so you're working off your debt, that's good. You need to.

But they need to regard their masters, he says in verse 1, as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and the teachings may not be reviled. You can't start, you know, getting bitter against your master because he's calling to your account.

Right? That's the purpose. Verse 2, those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the grounds that they are believers. Right? Oh man, I thought you were going to be merciful.

[40 : 37] I thought you were going to be gracious. Where's your grace? Don't you love Jesus? You can just let me off. Rather, they must serve all the better since those who benefit by their good service as believers and beloved.

Teach and urge these things. In other words, Paul envisaged a community where honor, people circulate freely. From leader to member, from rich to poor, to the seen, to the unseen, without hierarchy of value.

Where we see, where we, where we see, where we honor leaders with encouragement, not flattery. Where we hold leaders accountable with grace, not gossip.

leadership. Where we raise up future leaders who understand honor as service and not status. We don't need more celebrities, do we?

They chuck celebrities on the TV. And occasionally something will pop up. And I'll have to say to someone who's in the house who's watching, I don't know who they are. These are celebrities. I thought the definition of a celebrity is they're recognizable, they're someone that you know, but apparently that definition has now changed.

[41 : 55] They're just anyone. Anyone who could put a camera in front of their face and talk on YouTube or whatever. They're a celebrity now. We don't need more celebrities, right?

We need men and women who are willing to take the lowest seat because they know Christ took the lowest seat for them and has restored the honor. In thinking about this this week, I was reminded of a practice or an art in Japan.

In Japan, they have something called *kintsugi*. Have you come across this? So in the house, they have a valuable bowl.

It's not a valuable bowl in terms of money-wise, but you know, mother-in-law bought it for you for Christmas, so it's all of a sudden become valuable. Probably more valuable, that's mother-in-law, than mother, right?

So it's valuable and you break it. Oh my gosh. In Japan, there's something called *kintsugi*, which is the art of restoring honor.

[43 : 13] And I like this idea, and they would restore it with gold, as you can see, or a precious metal. Rather than throw it away. And the idea is that, you know, the cracks don't disappear.

They're filled with something more precious than the original clay. And when the repair is done, the bowl is worth more than it was before it was broken.

And then I was thinking that that's exactly what God does with us. He doesn't erase our shame. He fills the cracks. But you know, He fills the cracks with something way more valuable than gold.

He fills it with His blood. He covers us. This is the idea of covering. He covers us with His blood. He fills the cracks. And by doing so, He restores our value.

Not separate from Him, but now intricately in relationship with Him. Value found in Him. And that's what 1 Timothy 5 is calling us to be.

[44 : 23] Almost like a Kintsugi community of honor. A family where the blood of grace runs through every fracture until the world doesn't see us and our crackpots.

but sees the beauty of the one who gave us back our value because of Him. Let's pray. Father, thank You that when shame told us to hide, You came looking for us in love.

Thank You for clothing us in the righteousness of Jesus. For giving us value that can't be earned or lost. Lord, You took our shame and You covered us our shame with honor.

Lord, we want to thank You this morning, Lord, that You are the one who has ultimate value and ultimate worth. And yet You became as really nothing so that we may inherit Your value and Your worth by being connected to You.

Amen. Amen. Holy Spirit, we pray this morning, Lord, that we would see each other through those same eyes of grace.

[45 : 48] Fill our church with kindness and respect and generosity. Guard our leaders, strengthen the weary, keep our hearts amazed by Your gospel.

Send us out as people of honor in a world of shame, living proof of Your redeeming love. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.