

Godly Relationship with Your Elders

by Aaron Hurst

This sermon emphasizes the importance of honoring and supporting church leaders, focusing on the role of elders and the need for proper relationships within the congregation. It highlights the balance between esteeming leaders while recognizing that ultimate authority and salvation come from Christ alone. The message encourages obedience, submission, and wise discernment in how we interact with church leaders, emphasizing the joy that comes from following God's wisdom for His church.

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 1 Corinthians 2:1, 1 Corinthians 4:6, 1 Timothy 5:17, Hebrews 13:17

Topics: "Honoring Church Leaders", "Obedience and Submission in the Church"

Description

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Transcript

Well, good morning. I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God, aren't you? I don't intend to always be seated when I share the word, but as I was pondering about sharing today, you know, I thought I'd just like to invite you to join me in a family meeting here, that we can talk about the things that God is doing and what God has done. First of all, I'd like to say thank you to the congregation.

Thank you, Brother Robert. Thank you to the congregation for your love, your prayers these many years that I have had the privilege and also the responsibility to serve as lead elder. As many of you know, last Sunday there was a commissioning here, a laying on of hands, a passing of the baton to our brother Tim Eschbach in the role and position of lead elder.

I want to thank the congregation here for your support, for your prayers, for your love, and especially last Sunday you just overwhelmed us with blessing. All the cards and the kind words, words of encouragement to us, Janice and I say thank you very much from the bottom of our hearts. Brother Tim shared on our brother's meeting evening that how did this come to be that he's in this place of the role of lead elder? Because as he looked at his giftings and his natural tendencies or God-given gifts and tendencies, he sees himself coming behind a visionary, a trailblazer, and get underneath them and behind them in support and to get behind the vision and to help them to see that vision come to pass and be fulfilled.

Then brother Tim shared these words. He said, you know, as he was giving that some further thought, it dawned on him that is exactly what his role is. He's getting behind the vision of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He's getting behind the King of kings and the Lord of lords and laboring with him. Jesus, the captain. Jesus, our forerunner.

Jesus, the author and completer of our faith. Jesus Christ, the head of the church. Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

You know, brother Tim, as you look unto Jesus, you shall receive inspiration and courage and wisdom and divine enablement to co-labor together with Christ. Jesus Christ is the chief shepherd. We are the under shepherds.

I want to bring a message in a few moments on Jesus Christ, where in Matthew 16 and verse 18, he said, I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. We're going to repeat that here this morning. We're going to declare that before the Lord and before the angels of God and the principalities of the powers of darknesses and the principalities of God that Jesus Christ said, I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

I want this side over here to proclaim it in this matter and then this side, the last part of it. So again, before we do it together, I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Can we do that? All right, all together.

I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. You see, that's our only hope, brothers and sisters. If it would have depended upon me these last 20 years, we would be utterly shattered and scattered and lost.

But you see, Jesus said, I will build my church. Jesus said, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. You know, I thought it would be good for us to receive a few words of instruction from scripture that this church, this little local assembly may prosper.

Last Sunday, we focused quite a bit on the responsibility of the elders, the lead elder. Today, I'd like to share a few words in relation to how we, as a congregation, as brothers and sisters, relate to our lead elder, to the ministers and deacons here at Charity. Turn your Bible to 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, and verse 12.

Let's pray together and ask the Lord's anointing upon his word. Father, we come in Jesus' name, and Lord, we acknowledge that all is vain unless your spirit quickens your word. Father, we ask for your anointing of your Holy Spirit upon your word and upon each of your servants here today.

Grant us ears to hear, open hearts to receive, surrendered will to our heavenly Father. Bless this congregation. Deliver us from evil.

Lead us not into temptation. Lead us in your righteousness, in your holiness. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.

This we ask in the name of Jesus. Amen. 1 Thessalonians 5, verse 12.

Are you there? Yes? Let me see your hands. You're there? Yes? Amen. You know, who could better instruct us in such wisdom than God? The all-wise, loving Father in heaven knows what is needed for his

people.

And he tells us here in verse 12 of 1 Thessalonians 5, And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves. Quite a number of things are spoken here.

I guess if I'd want to zero in on the one aspect, is that there is an esteem. There is a holding in high regard and respect and honor. Banish thoughts of criticism.

Banish those negative thoughts and those accusations from the accuser of the brethren. Hold in esteem and in honor and respect in love. In love.

In that Christ love. That new commandment that Jesus gave. A new commandment I give unto you that ye love one another, as I have loved you.

For their work's sake. Their work's sake often is a lonely work. It's a work that is a hidden work.

It's a work that those looking on from outside of that work can maybe misunderstand it. Can be misunderstood. It's a work at times that requires the servant of the Lord to be silent.

With one sentence he could answer your questions. But speaking that one sentence would be exposing some person whom he loves too much to expose. Who he knows it would wound.

And damage perhaps. So it's a work of prayer. It's a work that requires great patience as the scriptures teach us.

It's a work that demands long suffering and forbearing. It's a hidden work. Brother, sister.

God in his wisdom says, esteem them highly. Give them grace. Pray for them.

I would like to also look at a balancing thought. You know the scripture is very balanced. Let's go now to first Corinthians chapter two.

First Corinthians chapter two and beginning in verse one. And I brethren when I came to you came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified.

And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom. But in demonstration of the spirit and of power.

That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men. But in the power of God. How be it we speak wisdom among them that are perfect.

Yet not the wisdom of this world nor the prince of this world that is come to naught. But we speak wisdom in a mystery. Even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory.

I would like to say here that well maybe we should read another verse. I think it would be fitting to read another verse. Just turn over to first Corinthians four and let's break in there.

As the apostle shares these words in first Corinthians four. He says in verse six. He says brethren I have in the figure transferred these things to myself and to Apollos for your sakes.

That you might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written. That no one of you be puffed up for one against another. For who maketh thee to differ from another and what hast thou that thou did not receive.

And now if thou didst receive it why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it. The thing I want to focus in on here in these two scriptures that we read. While we hold an elder in esteem and honor and respect.

There's a balance and that is that Paul and Apollos recognized that there's a temptation for a person or men to put a person in a position in their thoughts and in their minds that they ought not to. Because another place in Corinthians Paul said who is Apollos or who is Cephas. You know we're just men.

It's Christ who is the head. It's Christ who gives the increase. It's Christ who brings about life change and salvation.

It's Christ. And so I want to encourage us this morning that these scriptures are not contradictory. It's a balancing truth for us that says don't put a man on a pedestal and don't look to a man for your salvation or for your strength or for your wisdom or for your deliverance.

Don't put a man in a position where you usurp him over the headship of Christ and you put him there above where he ought to be and you think more highly than what you ought to think. This is a danger. I'm old enough now that I have seen this play out in more ways than one and in different places.

And then when that person, that man will fail you, I will fail you, not intentionally, but that man will fail because he's not to be put there in your thoughts and in your heart and in your mind because that is a place that belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ alone. It's sad to see the damage that that'll do to a man and to his family when a man is put upon a pedestal. That does not mean that don't highly esteem your elder.

Not at all. You see the highest esteem you can give your elder is to pray for him. It's to encourage him.

Let's go also to 1st Timothy 5 17. Turn your Bibles to 1st Timothy 5 and verse 17. Are we there? Got your Bibles with you this morning.

1st Timothy 5 17. Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn, and the laborer is worthy of his reward.

Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all that others also may fear. I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.

Won't mention a whole lot about the double honor. We've already covered that quite well. But we have a further emphasis here of proper relationship to our elders, those who labor in the word and doctrine.

But then I'd like to go to verse 19. Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. You know, not obeying this scripture has resulted in devastation.

Not obeying this scripture has resulted in the enemy having occasion to divide and to destroy. And it's very sad. It doesn't say that there is no platform to bring correction to an elder.

But it tells us how it's to be done. Do not receive an accusation against an elder, but before two or three witnesses. I appreciate the way, I may have been brother, I believe it was brother Philip Rudolph shared this with us.

Someone came to him in the back of the church with an accusation against an elder. And he said to this brother, it was, you know, some people standing around fellowship. He said to this brother, just a minute.

And he raised his voice. He got the attention of everybody. And said, this brother has an accusation against an elder.

And I need two witnesses to come and join me that we can hear this brother's accusation. Well, guess what happened? The brother no longer had an accusation. This will go a long way.

You know, I remember, I remember when I was first ordained. Brother Moses, brother Denny said, Aaron, just be aware, you know, you're the new elder here now. And someone may just try to share something with you that would be an effort to try to set you apart.

Could be flattery, could be all kinds of things, or it could be an accusation against one of us. And I was grateful for that admonition. I was very, very thankful for that.

And I want to encourage us today, brothers, sisters, let's take this to heart. God knows what he's saying. Let us not enter into the realm or the platform or the arena of the accuser of the brethren.

Do you think maybe he has some accusations to bring against the brethren? Do you think those accusations might be multiplied against an elder? It could be. Don't join forces with him. Well, I see our time is swiftly passing.

Let's turn to one more. Hebrews 13. You know, it's so familiar that we can sort of, like Georgie was saying this morning, you know, the song becomes so familiar, we just sort of go through the motions of it.

Sometimes that can happen to us with scripture. In fact, God said to Israel, to his prophet Isaiah, he said, you know, your sacrifices, your solemn assemblies, your new moons, I'm loath them to bear it. Why? Because it had just lost its reality of life.

Hebrews 13. Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls. I'll just pause there for a moment.

Lord, how do we say this? Paul said, of the trials, of the afflictions, of the persecutions that he endured, the sufferings for Christ and for his church, he said, there's one other thing that's very much on my heart, and that is the care of the churches. You know, as elders recognize their calling to watch for the souls that are under their care, and I don't maybe like to use that word, let's rather say that are in their care, that are part of the fellowship of local assembly, who have joined themselves together and have committed themselves together. Elders who watch for the souls of men, as they that must give an account.

Tim always keep that in mind. Peter tells us not as lords over God's heritage, but as examples to the believers. An elder who is watching for your soul is worthy to listen to and to hear his heart.

He's worthy to be submitted to. He's worthy to be obeyed, for he wants to give account with joy. He wants to give account with joy, and not with grief, for that is unprofitable to you.

I don't know how this is going to look on judgment day. I don't know. I don't know.

It's a very sobering scripture to an elder. So my encouragement to us today is let's be wise, like we shared this morning in Psalm 53. One of the marks of the fool was he's proud and he's wise in his own eyes.

And he will not hear correction and instruction. But I believe better things of you, my brother, my sister, that you are wise and we shall receive the instruction of the Lord. We shall walk by his spirit in obedience to his wisdom for his church, that we may prosper.

And that we may do it with joy. Oh, I want to end on that note, that we may do it with joy. I will build my church.

I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. That was Jesus who said that.

What an encouragement. What a word of promise. And as we look at the history of the church, though they were slain, yet they triumphed.

Though the Bibles were burned, yet today it's still the number one selling book. The governors, the kings who decreed to destroy the testimony in the kingdom of Jesus are long gone. But the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ prevails and shall evermore stand.

And oh, brother, sister, let us be wise in how we build and let us build with the wisdom that we heard from God and we shall prosper. The Lord bless you.

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