

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via [hopewellarp.org](http://hopewellarp.org))

So, we come to the Last passage that. Going to look at. This biblical theology of the deaconate. Uh, next lord's day in this habit school. So, we'll review the Procedure for, Taking nominations and How we get from there? Uh, to the installation.

A new deacons. But we're in first, Timothy 6 verse 17 through 19. These are God's words. Commands, those who are rich in this present age, not to be haughty. Nor to trust in uncertain. Riches. But in the living, God, who gives us richly all things? To enjoy. Let them do good that they be rich in, good works.

Ready to give willing to share. Storing up for themselves, a good foundation for the time to come. That they may lay hold. On eternal life. I'm in god's word. Now, command those who are rich and I think we all Uh, Fall into that category biblically. A deaconate at Hopewell and 2023 at least 20, 25 may end up being different, the way things are going in.

Our In our nation for christians. If and god's providence. He keeps us faithful and he makes faithfulness more costly. Than we may not end up being So wealthy. Uh, we have spiritual fathers. Among the covenanters who were Titled land, they had land, they had great wealth and they gave it all up.

Uh, just to worship god in the way. That he has instructed. Uh, but for now Uh, we are Rich. The. Sorry. The activation of the rumor is a little bit distracting for now, we are rich and Believe it's luke's account of john's baptism when he tells them to bear fruit.

Uh, in keeping with repentance and They asked him what that was and he kind of gave Uh, Providentially customized instruction about what that fruit was. If you're a soldier, if you're a tax collector, etc. The rich ones in that passage are the ones you had two tunics. So which of you have more than one set of clothing?

In your chest of drawers or in your, or in your closet. And those who have extra food. How many of you children? Have seconds and thirds and however, mom will let you until she says, nope. I think you've had enough Um, And of course our riches are Our way beyond an extra tunic and extra food.

And praise god, but there are spiritual dangers for the rich. And one of god's blessings to his people that he gives us. For using the good things that this world that he has given us. Well, Our deacons in the church. The the elders, of course. In the means of grace, especially in the teaching of the word.

Um, Give instruction, but then the deacons come alongside And they help administer. And lead and give practical counsel and guidance. And so forth. Forming of opportunities. To to use rich as well, etc. Uh, but they, they administer those things so that By the ministry of both sets of christ's ordained servants to us.

Uh, we may be helped to escape. The temptations and spiritual dangers that come with wealth. Um, which are real and great. Uh, you remember james telling the wealthy in the church, James telling the wealthy in the church to weep and howl. For what is about to come upon them.

And so we want if god has appointed to us to be wealthy in his providence, To have that wealth in a way that does not result in weeping and howling. And so, in this passage, Just these three verses. He gives us instruction her, he gives Timothy instruction for the wealthy.

Um, among the ephesian congregation. Instruction for avoiding pride. False security. In gratitude, which includes also a an overly. Dower. And Um, Ascetic or stoic. Approach to wealth. And then, Uh, spiritual complacency Um, And, You know, you hear that list and you think of the common, Things that many of us battle against spiritually.

And you see how the great level of comfort and the amount of material goods that we have. Uh, do contribute to our spiritual affliction. Uh, we are proud and haughty and falsely secure and the things that we have. I'm thankful and joyful. Um, Yeah. The, the fruit of the spirit.

Being marked first and foremost by love. But secondly, by joy. Uh, We are. Uh, not so ready and not so willing. For for good works. And thus, we are very comfortable in this age. And not eager for the age to come. The creations groaning and the spirits groaning often.

Do not find their third counterpart. Their third cobelligerent. In our groaning for the resurrection. In the return of the lord jesus. And so this is a very important appropriate passage. For us to conclude with. Hoping that. We'll continue to learn these things from god's word and the spirit will write the truths of these.

Versus on our hearts. And that god will give us. Uh, deacons so that when Um, When we are eager and desiring to bear fruit and keeping with repentance and these areas. We have men who are Uh, wise and ready. To help us. So first Command those who are rich in this present age, not to be haughty.

Being rich in this present age threatens to infect, our thinking, It endangers us of Uh, falling into a mindset that are well has somehow lifted us up above others. That's the idea behind the word haughty. To a place where we are not needy. This haughtiness. Often shows up when we pray.

Give us this day, our daily bread. Uh which we do because we're good christians and jesus told us to pray that way, but do we do not feel the neediness. Of god's intervention and generosity. That we might have breaded tomorrow. In fact, If ever. Uh if ever it occurred to us that we might not have bread tomorrow, we would be very insecure and shaken.

Because we have not felt the The continual daily repetition. Of god's generosity towards us. We have become haughty lifted up in ourselves. By the riches that he has given us. Um, So, if we do not see our need in material things, which touch us. So perceptively, so palpably, Uh, we are immediately.

Um, weekend. In the continuity of our need in spiritual things as well. The lord. Has granted us to be body and sold together. And, If having a greater portion of the things of this world is permitted to weaken, Our feeling of neediness, if we are lifted up by our wealth with respect to material things than that.

Overall, feeling of needing us before god is Is diminished and Um, If the lord gives us, Those crooks in our lot that make us feel how spiritually needy we are. Occasions in which, our remaining sin comes out and we are praying with all the more vehemments forgive me, my debts.

As i forgive my debtor or forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. One of the ways that we may have come in to a situation in which, our wise father, Of. Determined it was. Best and kindest, and most necessary to afflict us that way. And let our sin express itself more.

One of the ways we may have come into that. Um, Spiritual pride is by the haughtiness. Of feeling higher or elevated in ourselves. Um, By not. Being being or feeling needy of our daily. Bread. Um, So that's one danger of uncertain riches. As haughtiness. And That's of course, immediately connected to The next danger, false security.

False security. You see that in the rest of verse 17, Command those who are rich in this present age, not to be haughty nor to trust. In uncertain riches. But in, The living god, i think of Mentioned to many of you that proverbs 23. Verse 5 is one of my favorite proverbs.

Because of how delighted my children were at one point. Some Maybe 15 years ago. So, i guess that narrows down which children i didn't mean to out anybody Um, when we were going through the proverbs and we And i gave a fairly vivid description of different forms of wealth, literally sprouting wings and flying away.

Um, you know, you Go to pay at the store and your credit card, sprouts, wings and flies, away from you. And you have, Cash, that was back. When people carried cash, i know. We're all supposed to carry cash. And instructed, well, by my elders. Um, but using using cash that sprouts wings and flies away and And man, with a A great store of gold and riches, like smugs.

Hoard under the mountain and he goes in and it's all sprouting wings and flying out the tunnels in the windows and Um, But just it flies away from you. They're uncertain riches. We were just Uh, just before we got into this, we were thinking about how in 2023 that deacons job might be Helping the congregation live, well richly.

And in 2025, we may have deacons Helping the congregation live well, out of poverty. And,

Riches are. Uh, are likely. To depart in this life and certain. To depart at the conclusion of this life. They are. Uncertain. It is a false security. That we have. And then if we are secure in them, And so we are not to trust. In the riches that god, Uh gives us.

Well what are we to do with them? Interestingly, the first thing that we are to do with them is enjoy them. End of verse 17 before we get to be rich in, good works in verse 18. Uh, we are to enjoy them in verse 17. Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty.

North of Charleston, uncertain riches. But in the living god, Who gives us richly all things? To enjoy. Enjoying the richness of god himself. In his generosity to us is a prerequisite to good. Works being actually good. Remember there were those who gave alms That Jesus condemned. They gave alms because they thought that made them great.

They gave alms to be seen by men they received already in this life. The reward. They did not do it. Uh, a secretly. Uh, but Openly. And so, This is this is not a passage that praises. Poverty. It's a passage that praises spiritual wealth. Which is not incompatible. With material wealth.

And so your attitude towards your wealth itself. As god's gift, god's generosity god's delight in giving us joy in every way. And so if god wants us to delight in him and then he makes an entire world full of good things. One of the first things that we must do with those, good things is enjoy them.

And if we are enjoying them with gratitude, Then when we give to others, we are imaging. God not trying to feel better about ourselves or or more, right? In ourselves. But wanting to share the joy. Of knowing the god who has given all of these things. Some of you know that we have at times in our life and god's amazing providence.

Been the recipients of Extraordinary material gifts. Um not knowing how necessary they would later be for things that Well, we didn't know that. That god was going to bring us into in his providence. Um, But, Uh, on one of those occasions, probably the The second biggest i'm going to reserve, biggest for my parents.

But the the second biggest material donation. That we've received, we actually Were worried and rightly. So, About how some and the congregation at that point. Uh, would

think about the pastor having? In that case, such a nice home. And the The ones who were giving it. Said. Well, you just tell them Look at how granted our god is.

Look at the great thing that god has done for us. And bring them into like god, instructs israel to sing. Rejoicing and laughing with you saying, god has done great things for that. As you rejoice and say, god has done great things for us. Well, they had learned that because One of the reasons they were so easily willing secretly.

To pee so generous. Was because they enjoyed. The good things that God had given them as good from god. And their their enjoyment. And their gratitude. Uh, led Uh, to generosity. And so, the You know, there's a danger. Of skipping. Straight to trying to be rich in, good works.

Without first enjoying the goodness of what god has given us. Good works are only good as imaging god and responding to god. They are never good in terms of attempting to elevate ourselves. By how good our works are. And so, Uh, When? Whenever you are. Um, Receiving your food or just in the continual and come home at night.

To a safe home. Warm or cool home, depending on the time. Of year. Uh, comfortably appointed. You go into your closet. And, I was gonna say, it's You, you don't have the difficulty. Where you have difficulty choosing. Although there are rich people who don't have difficulty choosing. I know of one at least to, he has all the same shirts and all the same pets.

He has like 15 of each but it's just so that he never has to Think about what he's going to wear. They just grabs the next one of the same thing. Um, but when you go into your Less idiosyncratic, closet and you have to spend a couple of extra seconds, just to continual enjoyment of god's goodness to you.

Knowing yourself to have rich as lavished upon you everywhere. You turn everything you do. And so, whenever you do have opportunity to give to another one, you are this grateful person who wants to give more opportunity to others for gratitude. Um, So that takes us from Uh, Fighting. Ingratitude.

That, that may be a result. Of riches. And I'm sure you've run into that too. Um, A wealthy person who is so focused on accumulating more wealth. He draws no joy from what he has. In fact, he keeps buying things. And he's got a ton of things and he tries to find.

Some pleasure in them. But it's It's fleeting if he ever has it. In the moments that he has it. It's Um, It's superficial. So you go from fighting and gratitude to fighting complacency The end of verse 18. Let them do good that they be rich in, good works. Ready to give.

Willing to share. These are. These are applications to our hearts, aren't they? Which means? That when our rich little children, which they are, Rich. How many of us have

seen a situation of children where you got to? Um, A low single digits each child. Yeah, two, three, seven, nine.

I guess those aren't low single. And anyway, Uh, you've got a child who has an enormous, they've got a mini smalls, Treasure trove. Um, You know. Back when we used to. Celebr. The feast of the glorious birth. One year when we were rather poor, Uh, we had both sets of grandparents.

Send. Competing extraordinary amounts of money with. This is one reason why designated giving But that wasn't designated giving in a church, it just came with strings attached. It all had to be spent on toys for the children. And it was actually. Mentally challenging. To figure out how we were going to spend all of that money on toys for the children, and physically exhausting to procure, it all, and arrange it.

And then, Um, Anyway, some of some of you have Probably observed. Uh, where a child who has. Yeah, 50 things that they could play with another child, starts to, to play with one of them and that becomes The most treasured thing in the world. And they have to be talked into sharing that 50th thing.

While there is an important. Opportunity to talk about the second half. First Timothy 6 verse 18. That there is a condition of the heart, that's being exposed. Readiness to give. Willingness to share. That if The lord, jesus is laying hold of my heart, and i am a four-year-old with 50 toys.

And i have got a friend coming over. I am not so excited to have him. See me play. With my newest toy. I am showing off my toys to advantage. Hoping. That he will want to play. With one of them. So, there is this. This planning of hearts to be ready to give now when we become older and more sophisticated, And we do things like budget.

Uh, that the part of our budget that we would one part of our budget, we should be excited about all of it. If we're using it all rightly for, for God's glory, but one part of our budget that we are excited about Is the charitable giving generosity part of the budget.

So that as soon as we hear about, Uh, brother, or even a neighbor. Especially a brother. Uh, but also the neighbor Who has need? We're like, yes, i can give. They said there's that readiness to give There is seeing the extra tunic. I mean if you hear john the baptist he's talking about these rich guys.

Have two sets of tune it too close. He's got two tunics. What is he going to be on the lookout for? A guy who needs a tunic. And he sees the guy who needs a tunic, this is hypothetical. We don't know that anybody actually responded this way. This is why we needed jesus to pour up the spirit and give us new hearts because he's the one who could who could give the baptism that made the difference, not the baptism that told them they needed the difference.

But supposing the lord has done that to somebody. He's on the lookout for some guy who needs a tunic because he's ready to give. And then when the moment presents itself, he's Willing to share. And so, there's Um, there's a providential assignment. That correlates to. The healthiness of your wealth.

Your bank account, your investment accounts or whatever? Uh, where you are? Ready. To give and willing to share. Now in that, don't forget that. Um, your children and your grandchildren are more nearly assigned to you. In god's providence. Than any other brothers or neighbors. Um, So, don't go and Wipe out what you were storing up to give an inheritance to your children and say, well, pastor said to you and Sabbath school Um, We have to.

This is one of the ways that A deacon may. May help us. He may remind us of things that we've learned. And other passages and say, I love that you want to do this and that you are ready and willing to do this. Are you remembering to take care of your household first?

So that you don't deny the faith and because and be worse than an unbeliever. Even out of what was sincerely an joyfully intended. Okay, so things are complex. But there are real spiritual issues here. Did you have No, i was just going to say that the sort of said what i was saying that.

All high generational wealth. We were able to help your family, so About that. You don't want them to have struggled.

But what you see of the pagan from many christians is a live everything for that moment in time and each success of generation haven't start all over again and they have no benefit of, you know, having a pool as well. Right. And This is one of those situations in, which the Uh, the wisdom of the deacon in sorting through things.

According to other biblical principles that we've already seen Um, Giving things isn't always giving delight in god. Right. One of the, one of the first books that Um, I plan to lead our deaconate in and or through, and they're continuing education. Um, You know, once they're installed, there's a book called when helping hurts.

Um, And, One of the things that enables you to be more ready to give. Or continue to be ready to give is Managing, what the lord has has given you. Well, Uh, so that you can Be able to to continue giving. As you go along, and those are things that Um, You know, those are considerations.

That take wisdom. Uh and yet, there is this attitude towards what we have. In this readiness and this willingness, That are. Part of the primary instruction for christians and providential situations such as such as ours. So, ready to give? And willing to share. And then not only in this.

Enjoyment of god and wishing to share enjoyment with god. Uh, but in properly maintaining this Desire for the resurrection. This desire. Um, For. Uh, the life or the time rather to come.

Storing up. For themselves a good foundation. For the time to come that they may lay hold. On eternal life. So good works. Remember are not only evidence of a renewed heart. They are. When we see the lord producing in us, if you find Uh, readiness to give and willingness to share.

That is genuinely interested in others, enjoying god's goodness and saying, not behold. What frank the good that frank has done for me, but Uh, but Yeah, franka soap, self-forgetful and thankful to god that they learned from frank to say about the things that frank gave him. Behold, the good that god has has done for me.

You know, that's evidence of a renewed heart. But remember that? Good works are also. Prerequisites. To the enjoyment of god, himself and glory. We are still not just pursuing peace with all men, hebrews chapter 12 but the holiness. Without which we will not see the lord. If we are going to see jesus as he is, Uh, we hope That we will be like him because we will see him as he is.

And And those who hoped thus purify themselves as he is pure. First john three, versus one through three. So, there is Um, Uh, when you, when you have things of this world, You can employ them either. In clinging more tightly to this world. Right? And the Corinthians went through a time of suffering and trial in which Um, In which part of the apostolic instruction for them.

In first corinthians, 7 was let them have these things. Have them as if they didn't. And even. You know, that we would hold lightly. To the things and blessings of this life by comparison to how we hold tightly. To the things of the life to come. Of the time to come and so you have wealth.

And one of the things we want to do with that wealth, Is use it for good works, knowing that this glorifies our redeemer. That this is opportunity to grow in holiness, which we will take with us. We will not take the things of this world with us. Remember, we said earlier, That they are.

Uh, likely to vanish even in this life. And even if they don't vanish in this life, they don't sprout wings and far away in this life. They will vanish from us as soon as this life is over. So you will sprout wings and fly away from your stuff. Hopefully.

Right, if you're conformed to christ, At the moment of your death, you're made perfect and holiness and immediately pass into glory. And you will immediately be infinitely more wealthy, without your stuff then you ever were with your stuff. Because you will have. Uh, you will have him and so You can use the things that you have.

By enjoying god himself and them and employing them in generosity to others. They can actually end up being A means by which you let hold of eternity. So the the good stuff is not bad, it's good. But you must use it in a manner that's good and not harmful.

It is. When we are. Um, comfortable enough in this world. We have enough stuff. That the things we want to do with it or the prospect of having a little bit more. So that i can do more things actually, in our hearts makes us kind of unwilling to leave this world and unwilling to go to the time to come.

You know, that's a point at which you, you've got a first, Timothy 6:19 opportunity for Um, for thinking through now how am i thinking about my stuff that i That i am not laying hold. Of eternal life. I'm not Establishing a good foundation. Uh, not just for this world, but especially for the time to come.

So with all those things in mind, sorry i was not looking at the clock at all. I just saw what time it is. Uh, just here. First, Timothy 6 17 through 19. Command those who are rich in this present age, not to be haughty. Nor to trust and uncertain riches.

But in the living god, Who gives us richly all things to enjoy? Let them do good that they'd be rich in, good works. Ready to give willing to share. Storing up for themselves, a good foundation for the time to come. That they may lay hold on eternal life, man.

Let's pray. Oh lord you are the god who gives richly old things to enjoy. Give us to enjoy you. You are the god, he Has secured for us in Christ and secured us ourselves by christ. That which we will enjoy in the time to come. You yourself. Oh god, most of all.

But even then in a new heavens and a new earth, In which we may enjoy and employ good things. That you have given us. And so we pray. Oh god that you would make us to be those. Who enjoying you already? Live in such a way as pressing forward.

To lay hold of that. For which christ has laid. Hold of us. We ask it in his name, amen.