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So we're still in first Timothy 3 verses 8 through 13. Uh, We got a partway into verse 10 last week, but we'll read the whole And then we'll pick up again.

On the idea of deacons being tested first. So first Timothy 3 beginning in verse 8, likewise deacons It must be reverent, not double tongued, not given too much wine, not greedy for money. Holding the mystery of the faith. With the pure conscience. But let these also first be tested, then let them serve as deacons.

Being found blameless. Likewise their wives must be reverent. Not slanderers. Temperate. Faithful in all things. Let deacons be the husband of one wife. Ruling their children and their own houses. Well. For those who have served well, as deacons. Obtain for themselves. A good standing. And great boldness in the faith.

Which is in. Christ, Jesus. So, for the reading of God's word, Well, last week, we spent a lot of time especially going through what each of the Words in the description of the deacon's character. Uh, describes requires of that man, in verse 8. Oh, Not take the time to recap those now.

But we saw in verse 9, what produced the character and the man. Who are called to be deacons and that is it's doctrinally. Produced, it's theologically produced it's by being convinced of the truth about Jesus Christ so that independence upon Christ. What is first in Christ and not at all.

In us by virtue of union, with Christ, faith begins to come out of us. So that the character and conduct of the man is the result of a biblical true knowledge. Of the Lord. Jesus Christ. Not just Intellectually doctrinally about him, although certainly that but experientially knowing Christ by faith.

And then making him know, not only with the mouth, but in the case of the actual service, Especially with the life and we see that come out again at the end. Of what we have this morning in verse 13. That if we follow this process and the deacons are not only properly installed but carry out their ministry.

Well, Uh, before God and before man. That they, they obtain great boldness in the faith, which is in Christ Jesus, which is as we follow the Lord independence upon him and Christ by his spirit, produces fruit. In the ministry of the deacon, both in the church and, and in his home, he becomes a living demonstration that believing Uh, the truth about Jesus Christ and coming to the same acknowledge of Jesus Christ.

Gives us a union with Jesus Christ. The the reality of which is displayed in what we do in this world. And that makes us bold in that faith because the faith is into or in Christ Jesus and the more, the Lord produces things in our lives that cannot come from us.

The more the reality of faith in Jesus Christ and salvation through that faith, the genuineness of it is displayed. This is something that you can do children. At a very early age, don't forget, God calls, you saints. He tells you to obey Your parents in the Lord. So as you trust in Jesus not just

to forgive you from your sins but to give you his life in your heart, his strengthen your heart, to obey your mom and dad not just because things might go better.

Uh, for you, if you obey, mom and dad and certainly, i hope that you live in a home where disobeying mom and dad makes things go very badly for you. Uh, but the great reason that you obey mom and dad, is you belong to jesus christ? And now, instead of the death that is in you from yourself, there is life, that is in you from jesus for such things, as honoring mom, and dad from the heart and obeying them.

Therefore, right away all the way and cheerfully, and you even at your age, Dear lotte blocked in, you can have great boldness in the faith that is in christ. Jesus. And, And then when people ask your parents, how do you get your kids to do that? What do you do?

And you can say, I didn't do that at all. That came from the lord jesus christ. And i could tell you the things that he says to do. But the reason they work isn't because we do those things. It's because he uses the things that he says to do.

He's the one. Who makes the difference. And so from deacons To toddlers. Uh, we may We may follow the pattern in his church, that That is laid out here. So we began last week to To consider let these also first be tested, then let them serve as deacons the word that is translated, then actually very specifically means afterward So that the, the imperative force Of the command.

Let them serve and i believe. That we had a question about that last week. This. Um,

Yeah, i think i nodded at someone but i think it was someone else who had asked me the question afterward, the requirement. That they serve as deacons. There is a, an imperative force. Yes behind it. Because if god has produced this character and if god has recognized it, especially by the church.

And if god has blessed, Their service and what they're testing, he is laying upon them an obligation. Uh, we Uh, we live in a church culture in which there's much emphasis upon feeling called, Uh but calling is actually something that comes from someone else not from yourself. Yes. There is a ministry of the holy spirit as he communicates to you and gives you a desire.

The one who desires to be an overseer desires, beneficial labor. Good work. But calling is especially something that is Uh, that comes by way of others. And so, Uh, Not that a deacon should be dragged, kicking and screaming but he should a man should take the, the recognition of the church.

Unless there is something hidden in his life and let him confess it and spare the church from coming under judgment because a man and sin Was was hiding that sin and mistakenly recognized by others. I'm not saying, Take what? Others think as More true than the reality. Of of your life.

Uh, but a man should consider the witness of the church and the the fruit of the life that is being produced by god himself as laying obligation, but the imperative force isn't just on that. The man who gets to this point, musts serve, but also the first and afterward relationship of those Of those two clauses.

Let these first be tested afterward. They shall serve if we can Translate the imperative. More, literally, why? Because They're testing has been irreproachable in the way that they have done it. And we mentioned last week that the word blameless, there is a different word than blameless backup. In verse 2.

And so we have another likewise then, Inverse 11. Likewise. Uh, the women. And probably the wise. And why do we say the wives? It's because immediately in the context, in verse 12 is going to make, it's going to give a requirement that the, the deacon be a man and that's the male specific word of one woman, and that woman is his wife.

So it's, it's not just Some anticipatory. A complementaryism. In which? In 19th to 21st century. Feminism was anticipated in the church for 2000 years. That Verse 11 was translated and understood as wife. Uh, no, it is. It is reading verse 11 in the context of verse 12. Now, the word, the word women may be generic, here it is expected that many of those who carry out the diagonal, service of the church are going to be women.

Uh, for one thing men ordinarily have day jobs. And so, there are women in various seasons of life even with their children who are training and leading their children. In the Priority of service of the church in the life. So being a mother, who's still Bringing up little ones doesn't mean you're not in a season of service may mean your hands are more full and we recognize god's providence and Part of the deacons without officer deacons ministry is, is managing.

Well, the resources that god has put in the church, including recognizing different ladies, season of life, and ability and availability and so forth. So there's there's not only that, but often The service that is that is being done as service that for biblical sensitivity and propriety ought to be carried out by women.

It is unlikely that the seven men in acts chapter 6, Are going and visiting single widows by themselves. Uh, this is biblically inappropriate. They are set over the business. Uh, but the it is quite likely that as far as the actual delivery of what the deacons put into the hands of the church for the care of the widows is being carried out by women.

Now the likewise in verse 11 does not go back to verse 2, it goes back to the testing In verse 10. So you have In verse 2, a bishop then must be and so forth and then you have in verse 8 likewise deacons reverent the likewise is picking up the the must be or that is necessary that he be.

Uh, from verse 2 because you had the name of an office in verse 2 and you have a name of an office in verse 8. The office of bishop in verse 2, the office of deacon in verse 8, verse 11 is not introducing and you office. It is not introducing new officers.

It is talking about the same procedure. So the the deacon who was tested and then afterward he entered into his office of deacon. He has received even in the procedure in which he came to be ordained and installed a good example, for how to put work into the hands.

Especially of Of his wife and of other women. This is. Even as a husband. Part of his kindness to his wife. That he doesn't overload her with work just because she happens to be the wife of a deacon. Uh, but he gives her a little bit at a time and and he would be sensitive.

Then he's following first peter, three living with his wife according to knowledge and an understanding way. And she doesn't drown in an avalanche of new responsibilities, because her husband came into church office. Uh, he gives her Opportunities as she goes along and does the the lord blesses. He asks her to do more.

Rather than as the pressure increases, he asks her to do more. It's really It's really. Quite a wise and prudent way of dealing with your wife, likewise when other women in the church are being enlisted for the service. That he wouldn't. Overload them and that they would be proven a little bit at a time and there are specific things that need to be proven about them.

Now, these are things that when we're talking about the deacon, Uh, Being qualified for office and identified for office. That should already be true about his wife. Why? Because his wife already serves under him in the home. Uh, she is. Uh, she is part of his testing and what must she be like?

Well, Uh, she too should be reverent in verse 11. So, not only Uh,

Okay. Not only is he a dignified in serious? Man. Not a Uh not a silly man as we saw in verse 8, but this is something that the lord has blessed to the ministry of his wife. She is The kind of woman who has the, the steady godliness, the dignity of, not only being made in god's image and thinking of Of other humans as made in first and foremost has made in god's image, but the dignity of being renewed in god's image in christ and thinking of other believers, first and foremost as being renewed in god's image and the lord jesus christ princes high princess high, princesses princess.

Hi princess and princesses Of heaven as it were. And so, there is There is a reference about them, you know, silly adolescent. Type. Young ladies who Might have their giggle gaggles. And have a silly and irreverent manner of life. Uh, When they're around. A reverent woman. That elevates them.

They're embarrassed to joke about the types of things that they would joke about among the less mature. Um, I don't know. How it works for all of you, but for me, there have been godly men who took life, seriously enough, they were not Sad or morose. And in fact, i think almost to a man, there's some of the most joyful Uh, men.

I've i'll speak of one. He's he's in glory, so he'll forgive me. Um, Yeah, gi williamson was one of the most happy men i have ever met. But he was also one of the most serious, And one of the, you know, the two great things The that help us.

One is. Will help me. One is always remembering that i'm before the face of god. And one of that, one of the really easy acid tests. For how i'm behaving is would i be embarrassed to behave this way around GI? Not the GI is to be compared to god at all, but he was an example of a reverent and dignified, man.

He had walked with the lord long enough, that That he lived in a way that understood what life is about, what a man is, what a christian is. And that was helpful to me. So, She ought to be reverent. She ought not to be a devil. New king james translates, slanderers.

That might be a little more polite. But maybe ladies who. Like to speak about others behind their backs and make accusations and bring people down. Uh, would be interested to know, or helped to know that. One of the bible words that describes that is Devil. And, and so, literally, Their wives must be reverent and not, she devils.

Uh, the lord helped the church. That tolerates a culture. Of speaking about others and backbiting. When the holy spirit refers. Uh to ladies who do that. And it's not just ladies who do that, is it? But when the holy spirit refers to ladies, who do that as she devils, Now, it's much more important than if a woman is going to be enlisted by the deacons employed by them and serving those who are in need That she governed her tongue.

And not speak about the neediness or her opinion or even the fact, You know, it might she might know and then maybe not just an opinion of what it was that brought them into need and how it was that the need. The need was met and what the evaluation is from the deaconate.

Of whether or not they're conducting themselves with what they receive from the church in a manner that that justifies continuing to support them. And there are a lot of sensitive details involved. In carrying out the diagonal ministry of the church. And so the, the law of kindness must be on the lips of this woman.

That should be true of the deacon's wife before he's ever installed to office. But it should be one of the things that he's paying attention to. And that the actin is paying attention to as they enlist various women, women In the service of the church. Are they governing their tongues?

Or a stuff leaking out. About those who are needy. Um, So reverent not slanders temperate. Uh, steady. Uh, not easily controlled or Unstable. They're reliable and dependable. And that goes also to the To the last part there. Faithful in all things. Not just that they do a good job but that they do specifically what they are entrusted to do.

Things are entrusted to do entrusted to them. And, you know that when that when something is assigned to them, it will be done. It will be done on time what we've done in the right manner. Um, They are. Faithful. In what they do. And so, This is something that by the deacons own service in his own house, by his own rule and governance in his own house, has come out in his wife's service, in the home, in his wife's service to others.

Every one of you married, men is already to some extent, a deacon Because you are commanded by god to exercise hospitality your commanded by god to contribute to to the needs of the saints. And you are the leader of a household and your wife is Uh, your chief. Was going to say administrator, but that She, she is the The highest one.

The number one in line. Of those who are carrying out the ministry of hospitality and and good works charitable works that you are overseeing So there's a pattern here even by the way, the the proving of the home Then is repeated now as a steward. Uh, in the church.

That. That shows and this goes back to what our senate is studying and please do keep praying for that committee that shows that the the office of deacon is an office of oversight. It is an office for service. But as an office of oversight of that service, This becomes even more clear.

In verse 12, which turns back to the deacons and Notice that this let deacons be. Uh, is just describing something that must continue as a deacon. He must continue prioritizing his rule in his own house. Let deacons be a man. Of one woman. That should shut down the debate about female.

Uh, female deaconate. Uh, first Timothy 5 has a role of widows. It's something that has recognized by the church. They are cared for By the funds of the church, there are specific qualifications or specific duties. And it is, uh, the role of widows is among other things. A role of service.

A roster, we'll use that word. So, we differentiate rol from ROLE. A roster of service and roster of servants. And so you have in In his in reformed church, history, biblically sound men who refer to female servants, or who refer to a roster of them. But they're talking about the first Timothy fines women, they're not taking first Timothy 3 11.

And inventing, females in the office. Of deacon. That is something that belongs to lesser men. Um and it's a little bit of a circular argument because of someone gets there, he demonstrates himself to be a lesser man. But the deacon is a, a man. And if he has a wife, he only has one All right, so he has a man verse 13.

What kind of man? A one woman Man. A man of Um, A man of one wife and we talked about that when we were talking about the elder that this Uh, this includes among other things, respect for marriage as a whole respect. For other people's marriages, a high value on the purity of The marriage bed, you remember?

Uh, hebrews 13. In which you have not just how we relate to those who teach the word to us, in verse, 7 and verse 17, which you do have. Don't you the instructions for exercising hospitality for remembering prisoners in? In their chains. And other. Other types of ministry that would fall under the authority of the deaconate.

And it is in that context, that the holiness, the sacredness of marriage and the purity of the marriage bed is also emphasized. And so, So one of the things that'll be most necessary for, For our deacons and our elders, and we covered that before they also are A meant to be a man of one woman.

One of the things that is most important for a deacon in our context, is that he be very clear about the sacredness of marriage. And that marriage be Uh, defined by god a covenant in which God is involved even among unbelievers. It is a covenanting. Now, it's a profane covenanting because they don't know the god.

Who is witness and party too their covenant. Uh, but the the deacon must be clear. About marriage and not just. His own marriage. And his own heart. Uh, so the deacon must be a man of one woman. And he must rule. His children and his own house. Well. Why?

Because, He's hoping to serve well or to deacon well, as a deacon. Uh, here again. How can you have this idea? That the office of deacon is not an office of authority, where one of the ongoing requirements for the man in his office is that he rule well at home.

So that When he does the same service in the congregation. Well, what services? He doing at home, he's ruling. What services he doing? In the he's ruling. He is governing. The ministry of service in the church and he's governing it as someone who knows. That his first place of services is home.

He doesn't become a deacon and forget his wife and children. He continues. To take care of his wife and children. He continues to lead his wife and children. He has not a man who sacrifices his family for the ministry. Here's a man who continues to lead his family in sacrificing together.

So they are not sacrificed by him. But together he leads them as they all sacrifice for christ. And there is a goodwill in this diligence for service because they know christ and his love for them, they know god and his love for them, they love god because god first loved them, and this is what produces love for God.

Love for his church, love for the brethren. And when he leads others in the church, he's not asking them to sacrifice their family, either. One of the things he's pressing upon. Men and women and children in the church. Is that their first place of service in the church is in their household.

In other words, He is a properly covenantally oriented, man. You might say and we're being a little bit cheeky, but It's okay because it's true. Let the decan be a presbyterian. Because he views the household. That's the primary unit of the congregation. And he says, if a man doesn't take care of his own He has denied the faith and he's worse than an unbeliever.

That's coming in chapter 5. Um, of the of this. Of this very letter. And so here's someone who who knows god's design for the church? And he wants, first of all, his home to be a place where we serve one another, because we belong to god and we've been joined to christ and my mom or my child or my brother, my flesh can't stand, but i'm not in my flesh.

I'm in my Christ and my christ's loved him and gave himself from my brother. And that's why i want to give myself for my brother. Not just share the grudgingly what i have. Because mom says so and that's how the house worked. Looking because my, my brothers and sisters.

Our first, the ones in my home are my first assignments from jesus. And their united to jesus. They have his name upon them in their, in their baptism. We profess him together, we worship him. Every day, hopefully multiple times a day together. And then our service in the broader body of the congregation would be a reflection of or a refraction from The way we're serving in our homes.

But the deacon needs to be that kind of man himself. If he's going to lead the rest of the congregation, And being those kinds of men and women and children. In the congregation. Right? So the deacon is a highly covenantal man exercising his authority leading the the Church of jesus christ.

In displaying the life of jesus christ. Not just when they're gathered in the assembly. But in all of their work in the world as well. So, The question that's currently before our senate of whether this is an office of authority. Uh, is Is far more important, i think than many people realize.

Because it is necessary, that it be an office of authority. So that every believer Be involved in. The work of service, which by the way we confess in the westminster confession, Um, I don't have a coffee yet.

So it it is our confession that we have A duty to one another. Chapter 26. And the communion of saints. All saints that are united to jesus christ. I for the sake of time. Yeah. Uh, i'll not read the whole thing. Uh, Being united to one another and love have communion.

In each other's gifts and graces, they are obliged to do in public and private whatever canoes to their mutual good. Both in the inward and outward man. That's 26, one 26.2 saints by profession are bound to maintain a, holy fellowship, and communion in, and there's worship and spiritual service, as also in relieving each other, in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities.

Right? And so we can we confess in our confession chapter 26 that the office of service. And we'll put quotes on that because it's not a ordained office, the role of service in the church actually belongs to every single believer. And we need the authoritative office of the deacon.

Who is? Christ's servant. Yes, but he refers to ministers. Elders pastors as servants. The word minister means servant. Uh, to exercise his authority because he is christ's appointed instrument for leading. First of all his home. And then the household of christ. In the work of service that is appointed to all believers, not Uh, just to one office.

In the church. Um,

I will take one one more moment. The the word for well in ruling their own house. Well, in verse 12, the word well in serving. Well as deacons is the same word as the word good. Uh, in obtaining for themselves, a good standing. And what the lord does is.

Uh, He keeps you. Um, in a suitable condition. For telling the gospel. To others. With great boldness, by the ministry that he gives you and that's especially true for the deacons. We saw this, didn't we almost immediately enacts, Where the lord brought a great revival. Where there was an in gathering of many who were added to the faith as the result of the installation and work of the deaconate, but we also saw it specifically in Steven.

We saw it specifically in phillip as they served well as deacons. God gave them good standing and great boldness and he used them as great evangelists too. Didn't he? And so, Uh, we want each of us. Uh, by the union with christ to live, such a life that gives us great boldness.

In the faith. That turns us into better and in god's providential using of it more effective evangelists. And the deacons should be leading the way in that as well. Uh, well, thank you for Bearing with going, A couple minutes over so that we can finish. Groupers 13. Let's pray.

Our father in heaven. How we thank you for the vision that you lay out for us, the pattern that you lay out for us of the christian's, life of the christian household of the christian congregation. Lord, we confess that one of the reasons why we are not Eager and often zealous enough for this is because we simply don't love you or the glory of christ as we should and so help us by your spirit to love you and to love and desire.

The glory of our lord, jesus christ. And then we pray that you would match to that desire diligence in these things by which he is glorified in our lives, by which the gospel goes forth and the way they you have designed and appointed that it would go. Oh lord, you have heard us many times and increasingly.

So for which we even thank you. Plead with you for revival. And we see here and are reminded, this is one of the ways that you bring it. And so we pray for our forthcoming deaconate. We pray o lord for the service and earthly things in each home, and in our congregation as a whole, In jesus name, amen.