

Do not rebuke an older man, but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.

Honor widows who are truly widows, but if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household.

to make some return to their parents, for this is pleasing in the sight of God.

She who is truly a widow, left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day.

But she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives.

Command these things as well, so that they may be without reproach.

But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he is denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than 60 years of age, having been the wife of one husband, and having a reputation for good works, if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work.

But refuse to enroll younger widows, for when their passions draw them away from Christ, their desire to marry and so incur condemnation for having abandoned their former faith.

Besides that, 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.

So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander.

For some have already strayed after Satan.

If any believing woman...

As relatives who are widows, let her care for them.

Let the church not be burdened so that it may care for those who are truly widows.

Thanks, Lee.

I'm a little nervous now.

I didn't think I had to write down how to spell ACME.

I'm wondering if my notes aren't thorough enough.

Also, you know, that was a really cheery scripture reading for Mother's Day.

And we do preach expositionally here, so if the next text in line has application for...

whatever the occasion is, we're going to preach it.

Part of that is because I don't trust myself to come up with great ideas every time a holiday rolls around.

And really, who wants to hear what I have to say?

We want to hear what God has to say.

And sometimes when you preach the next text with application to certain occasions, you'll learn something and you see something that you never would have if it was just you

telling people what you think they need to hear.

So that's why we're coming to this next text.

Also, Drew said if anybody has a problem with it, you can talk to him.

So ladies, direct all of your hate mail to Drew.

His email is at the back of the bulletin.

All right, let's ask for the Lord's help this morning before we dive into this text.

Heavenly Father, we know Mother's Day is a man-made holiday.

that this day in particular was not your idea, that we made it up.

But Lord, you designed womanhood, motherhood, the family.

Lord, you have specific purposes and intents and good things.

for mankind and your people in particular through these things.

So Lord, would you just open our eyes to see your good design, your good wishes for us as women, but also for us as families and us as a church family this morning.

Lord, would you help us to see, even in the midst of brokenness,

how you're redeeming and renewing and restoring, not just in the future, though we look forward to that, when all of the good things that you've given us find new and fresh life in glory with you.

But Lord, even right now, we pray all this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

So in Genesis 3, after Adam and Eve sinned, God told the woman, your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you.

And since then, we've seen domineering men throughout history.

We've seen domineering men in many areas of life.

We've witnessed women suffering at the hands of men.

But in the last 100 years or so, the pendulum has swung hard the other way in a lot of ways.

We've witnessed two, three, and even four waves of feminism that have produced statements like this from author Bell Hooks,

who is a woman, I will not have my life narrowed down.

I will not bow down to somebody else's whim or to someone else's ignorance.

Or a TV personality, Portia Williams, if I'm going to become a strong, independent woman and self-sufficient, I'm going to have to continue to make good decisions for myself.

My emphasis on myself.

And in all fairness, there seems to be a recent, and this I think would be categorized as like fourth wave feminism, a recent recognition that the hyper-independence championed by the feminist movement might not actually be attainable or even a good thing for anybody, men or women.

Leah Libresco Sargent, she's a Catholic feminist author.

She recently wrote a book, *The Dignity of Dependence*.

She argues in that book for the goodness of a chosen life of financial and even bodily dependence as a wife and mother.

So while we celebrate breakthroughs like this book,

of God's creation order and general revelation kind of breaking through some of the madness.

While we celebrate those glimpses and those rays of hope, we also acknowledge that, especially from our text today, that God's word

is way ahead of our society on that, right?

As the pendulum swings back and forth and it seems to maybe starting to edge back towards sanity in the middle, that God's word stands as a timeless critiques of all societies.

God's word critiques thousands of years ago when it was written, and today it critiques our society.

And on this Mother's Day, we hear in our passage that God loves when members of his family, especially women, care for others from a place of dependence.

God loves when members of his family, especially women, care for others from a place of dependence.

So Paul's giving instructions to Timothy on how to care, how the Ephesian church ought to care for their widows.

We're gonna notice three main principles.

There'll be a couple sub-principles, but three main principles from his instructions to Timothy on this really practical issue that was facing them at that time.

First, we're gonna see that it's right to view God's church as a family.

It's right to view God's church as a family.

Look at chapter five, verses one and two.

Do not rebuke an older man, but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters in all purity.

So Paul's telling Timothy that he's to relate to church members as family.

So Paul's, we've seen already in the first couple chapters of 1 Timothy, that Paul's been instructing Timothy to be strong with the false teachers that were on his elder board at the time, that were leading the church with him, that he needed to be strong with them.

They were proving themselves to be unbelievers, and therefore he's telling them to excommunicate them, to rebuke them.

Even in the passage right before this, Timothy was to be confident that

and to set an example for the believers in his youth.

But Paul doesn't want Timothy getting carried away.

You know, you start rebuking people.

You can start, you know, feeling a little big and good about yourself and just start rebuking everybody.

And Paul's like, that's not what we're going to do with God's people.

The instructions here are not to rebuke members of the family of God, but to encourage them as he would family.

The grammar of the sentence applies the verbs rebuke and encourage to all of the categories.

So he's not just saying don't rebuke older men and you can rebuke all the women and the younger men.

He's saying don't rebuke older men, older women, younger men, younger women, but encourage them, encourage them.

You still have to say hard things to your family.

But you talk to your parents, you talk to your brothers and sisters differently, don't you?

Because you've got to see them at Thanksgiving.

And you've got to go through future major life events with them.

And you've got a history together.

You've got kind of a common origin.

So we talk to our family differently.

When we have to confront them or we've got to say hard things to them, we're usually playing the long game.

in love, trying to help them see a pattern of speech, behavior, a desire to change.

A lot of times, those one-off flare-ups of anger don't really communicate a lot or have a major effect.

It's when we go to one another in love, when we go to one another looking to encourage good behavior, but also make the other person aware of bad behavior as well.

The main thing to see here is that Paul says that it's right for believers to relate to other believers with love, specifically the love and respect of family.

We don't use our brothers and sisters.

We don't leverage these relationships for our own gain.

Rather, we come to encourage, we come to church to gather together with one another, to encourage and to love and support one another.

And sometimes, often, that looks like saying difficult things and direct things.

It's from this perspective that Paul gives Timothy these instructions, right?

So he's giving him specific instructions to care for these widows and to both correct and also encourage good behavior and correct bad behavior.

But it's from this place of family, this mentality of loving one another as family that Paul,

Paul gives Timothy these instructions.

So we also see that as Paul begins to give Timothy these instructions on how to care for widows, that this mentality of family also is very practical.

So the love and respect one another as family, but also God's family in times of need steps in when natural families fall short.

God established the family unit in Genesis chapter 2 as the smallest, most fundamental unit of society.

So when people start to get together in societal units, the family unit is the smallest, most fundamental.

Larger institutions like the government and the church are generally, throughout Scripture, lend a supportive role to the family unit.

That's where instruction's happening, that is where encouragement and growth is happening primarily.

But because of sinful actions, because of tragedy or death, the family unit many times breaks down.

And we all know, being members of one family or another, that no family is functioning perfectly.

So the God who designed the family

has uniquely equipped the church, the body of Christ, to step into the gap when that breakdown happens, when the family unit starts to break down.

Now, when I say most fundamental unit of society, I'm not meaning that the family is the most authoritative voice in someone's life.

The most authoritative voice in an individual's life is God.

We see these two principles, God's authority in an individual's life, but also the ability of God's people, the church, to stand in the gap when family units break down in Jesus' words in Mark 10.

He said, Peter began to say to him, "See, we have left everything and followed you."

Jesus said, But many who are first will be last, and last will be first.

See, the brothers and sisters and mothers and children that Jesus is talking about here are the church, right, that step in now in this time and also in eternity, right, in eternal life.

But there are real people, flesh and blood people, that God gives to us among his people that stand in the gap when our natural families break down.

So it's right to view God's church as family.

It's also right, principle, big principle number two, to prioritize natural family.

Look at verses three to eight.

Honor widows who are truly widows, but if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents.

For this is pleasing in the sight of God.

She who is truly a widow, left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications of prayers night and day.

But she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives.

Command these things as well so that they may be without reproach.

But if anyone does not provide for his relatives and especially for the members of his household, he has denied the faith

and is worse than an unbeliever.

So Paul gives this principle both positively and negatively.

He says, here, do this, be marked by this, and don't do this, don't be marked by this.

Positively, he says that God is pleased when natural families show deferential love

Paul says it's pleasing to the Lord when children and grandchildren show godliness towards their parents and support them financially.

Make some return is a financial term here.

So he's talking about literally supporting them financially, especially towards the end of their life when they're in need.

The family unit was designed by God.

It's to be honored by God and respected, right?

That we're to respect these relationships that he placed us in.

And it pleases God to see families loving one another, caring for one another, especially in a time of need.

There's something symmetrical and beautiful about a mother caring for a child with all the work and love and self-sacrifice that goes into that, and then that child returning that work, love, and sacrifice back.

Back to her.

My kids have a little book.

I don't remember the name of the book.

And it's got like a little poem that doesn't quite rhyme perfectly.

And I don't know the tune.

They don't give you the tune to it.

But it's basically this little this mother holding this little boy.

Right.

And there's like, I don't know.

six little pictures of her holding this boy as he's getting older.

There's one really awkward one where he's like in his 40s and somehow he's still on her lap.

But then the last page is a real tearjerker because, you know, his old mother is there in his lap and he's singing the same song back to her.

You know, a little cheesy, but we do see the beauty in it, right?

That the one who cared for us, who nurtured us, right?

That we're caring for her

in particular in this passage, in her old age.

But if the beauty of this kind of relationship isn't motivation enough for us to do the right thing, Paul gives us some pretty strong words in verses seven to eight.

He says, command these things as well so that they may be without reproach,

But if anyone does not provide for his relatives and especially the members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Sometimes things are just said very clearly in the Bible and very strongly.

This is one of those cases.

Paul says not to prioritize natural family is to deny the faith and is to be worse than an unbeliever.

Paul's not saying the church ought to behave worse than an unbeliever.

Paul's not saying that the church member here who doesn't provide for his family is clearly an unbeliever solely on the basis of this behavior, though it is likely.

He still refers to them as believers.

He's giving some gracious assumption here.

But he says that their behavior at this time

is worse than that of unbelievers because most unbelievers, by means of creation order and general revelation, know how to care for their family, right?

They know they ought to care for their family and know how to care for them.

And so you're not just denying special instructions from God.

You're actually denying creation order and just instincts that God has given us and shown us in creation.

The denial of the faith here isn't the word for apostasy.

That's why I'm saying that

He's not necessarily an unbeliever simply by this behavior.

It's not the word for apostasy or denying Christ.

But Paul is rather saying that the behavior here is grossly out of line or out of step with the gospel.

And it brings reproach on the gospel from outsiders because outsiders know better.

And they're like, what's this good news, this special thing that you have if you're not even taking care of your own mother and grandmother?

Right?

So, you know, God, who sent his son, right, Jesus, who gave up his throne, all of its rights and privileges, set it aside, even gave up his life to serve his spiritual family, right, to serve his bride.

He knows how to care for his family and his loved ones.

To not care for our own family brings reproach on the gospel world.

is out of step with that gospel.

So it's right to adorn the gospel by prioritizing natural family, especially in this passage, caring for our moms and grandmoms.

And if we neglect caring for our mothers and our grandmothers, we bring reproach and shame on the gospel.

These are general big principles.

We could get into all the nitty gritty and imagine different scenarios, but this is the general principle that Paul's laying out for us here very clearly in 1 Timothy.

But Paul doesn't just address the family members here.

He also addresses the widows and the ladies in general, and he tells them how they can adorn the gospel well, right?

So we've got, here's how family members of widows and these ladies in need at this time can adorn the gospel well, and how can those ladies, those widows, adorn the gospel well.

And we see here in big principle number three that it's right for women to embrace dependence by caring for others.

I had to give it to you directly and simply, so it is very direct and simple in this point, but let me show you what Paul's saying here.

He's basically contrasting two different visions for godly widowhood, and by extension, godly womanhood, right?

So he's talking about how to behave as a widow well, but then I think the principles that he's giving there apply somewhat directly to womanhood in general.

We'll make the link here in a second.

First, he's saying he holds up these older widows, right, who are truly widows, and he says, be like this.

Look at verse 5.

He says, she who is truly a widow, left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day.

And then verses 9 to 10.

Let a widow be enrolled if she's not less than 60 years of age, having been the wife of one husband and having a reputation for good works.

If she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of the saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work.

All right, there's a lot of details here.

Some of these details I've covered when we went through the qualifications for being an elder, like the one woman man or the one man woman here.

I'm not gonna get into all the weeds there, but we just need to look at this contrast, and I think that'll help unpack the rest of the details if you have the energy and the gumption to go digging for yourself, all right?

So I'm gonna give you the roadmap and let you do some of the work, and like I said, you can go back to some other messages where we deal with this passage kind of preemptively.

All right, so first, older women be like this.

The first thing that Paul says about these older godly widows is that they are, by necessity, dependent upon God.

These older widows are truly widows, and they are, by necessity, dependent on God.

Women in Paul's day were not allowed to own property.

They weren't allowed to make legally binding business contracts.

They weren't allowed to testify in court.

So their economic options without a husband were very limited.

the large-scale business that can maybe produce some stuff out of the home, maybe glean, right?

There were some options open to them, but to really sustain themselves and sustain a family, even kids, was just really not open to them as an option.

Therefore, out of necessity, they were dependent on God to provide for their needs, often day-to-day and often week-to-week.

Now, we should note two things in that context about what God says to Timothy about these widows and what God says to these widows, to the widows of Timothy's church.

First, God praises these widows for their desperate dependence on him in verse 5.

He praises these widows for their desperate dependence on him.

They're praying night and day.

There's a desperation here.

where they're asking him supplications as a basic request for needs, right?

I need this.

And they're going to God night and day with their needs and their prayers.

This is a virtue for all of us.

We are all desperately dependent upon God.

We heard it in Sunday school, spiritually speaking.

We need God to soften our hearts, right?

To draw us in repentance to him, to change us from the inside out.

And those of us that maybe even have a really nice nest egg built up.

Job had a nice one and it was gone in a day, right?

Gone in two days, really, his family as well.

We are all desperately dependent on God, whether we acknowledge it or not.

Widows here, these widows had to acknowledge it, right?

They were forced into a position where they were very aware of their dependence upon God day in and day out.

I want to preach a whole sermon, especially after coming from a conference where I talked with a lot of brothers who are pastoring churches that can't meet their salary, got plaster falling off the walls, their buildings falling apart, that are very dependent upon God week to week.

for their congregations.

Anyways, just maybe if the nest egg is causing you to not be dependent upon God and is getting in the way of you living with an awareness of your dependence upon God, maybe it's time to be more aggressively generous with the nest egg, not necessarily foolishly, but at least aggressively.

And anyways, and now I'm preaching another sermon.

God praises them for their dependence, right?

He doesn't call them foolish.

He praises them for their desperate dependence on him.

Also, God does not address in this passage, in this passage, God does not address the system in which these women find themselves in.

God does do that in other passages.

He critiques the nation of Israel often for not caring for the poor and the vulnerable.

He critiques the church in the book of James, but God in this passage is not concerned about the system.

God always empowers the powerless, always empowers the powerless, not by highlighting their victimhood and blaming the system and the circumstances,

But he lifts up the downtrodden by reminding them that he sees, right?

That he cares for them, that he is their hope.

Again, God is concerned about the system.

We see that other places.

But when he's addressing those in the system, especially victims and the downtrodden within the system, he points them to himself, right?

He doesn't coddle them in their victimhood.

Rather, he empowers them by pointing them to their true source of power, which is him.

Listen, your circumstances, the role that God has called you to play in this life is never the most important thing about you, right?

Your relationship with God, His love set on you, and the degree to which you've become more like Him

Those are the most important things about you in that order.

God's love set on you.

His love set on you and the degree to which you have become more like him are the most important things about you.

The principle here is that God praises and exalts these women in dependent and vulnerable situations.

It's not just for widows.

This general principle is not just for widows.

Rather, it's an extension of godly womanhood in general, and we see that in 1 Peter 3, 1-7.

1 Peter 3, 1-7.

I just went over this passage with a couple in premarital counseling.

We had a lot of good discussion about it.

I'm not going to get into all the details today, but I'd encourage you to take this home, meditate on it,

Live in it.

Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives when they see your respectful and pure conduct.

Do not let your adorning be external, the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry or the clothing you wear, but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious."

For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord.

And you are her children if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.

Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers might not be hindered.

Peter says that the beauty that we, as a church,

But we, particularly as women, or particularly women, ought to prioritize and seek is the beauty of the heart, right?

An inner beauty, a hope in God.

That's the primary root here, right?

The beauty that we're seeking is this hope in God that manifests itself as inner peace, kind of fuels an inner peace that's expressed in a meek and quiet spirit, right?

Now, I know women have been, and we've talked about this before, and I don't want to blow by or not acknowledge the fact that women have been and are currently mistreated.

And we need to, men need to speak up when we observe women being treated with less dignity, worth, and honor than men.

But so much of what fuels this loud, combative feminism that we see today is fear, is the fear that Peter's addressing here in 1 Peter.

It's an understandable fear.

It's an understandable fear, but a fear nonetheless, that if I willingly put myself in a vulnerable position, if I willingly submit to a husband's leadership, if I take on the burden and the responsibility of children, then I will be too financially, physically, and emotionally dependent on other people, and people always fail and take advantage and let me down.

And what Peter is saying is that Sarah's hope wasn't in Abraham.

She wasn't putting her hope in Abraham when she submitted to him.

She wasn't trusting him.

He did.

We have a couple examples of how he abused his headship and told her to lie to Pharaoh.

But her hope, rather, Peter tells us, was in God.

And God saw and God protected her.

Now, ladies, God has given you some gifts that Sarah did not have to help protect her from abuse.

God has provided to you the elders of the church.

God has provided to you the government and police.

Make use of them.

Don't stay silent if your husband is abusing his leadership skills.

His headship in your family or in your relationship.

We want to know about it.

And given the right is not the correct word, but given the circumstances, the police should know about it as well.

But ultimately, our hope isn't in the elders of this church.

Your hope isn't in the elders of this church.

It's not in your husband.

It's not in the police.

Your hope is in God who establishes these institutions and gives them to you.

So use them, right?

Use them, but use them as an expression of hope in God.

All right, so godly widows, hope in God, which is expressed through, in verse five, endless prayer, but in verses nine and 10, we have a big long list of how else this hope in God is expressed.

Let me just read it one more time.

Let a widow be enrolled if she's not less than 60 years of age, having been the wife of one husband, and having a reputation for good works, if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of the saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work.

Now, this is not a comprehensive list.

It's not intended to be a comprehensive list for this particular financial support that the Ephesian church was giving to widows, but rather it's supposed to relay an image of what godly widowhood and womanhood would look like.

So the proper response though, right?

So we see our hopes in God, we see God caring for me, see God caring for my needs and serving me.

The proper response to being served and cared for by God like that is to serve other people, right?

When we stop worrying and fighting for our own needs, when that fear, that restless fear is quenched by God and his hope, there's a

all kinds of energy, all kinds of energy and ability and confidence to be used to serve other people.

So a woman who is constantly caring for others and never seems to be concerned about herself and her own needs is a woman whose hope

is in God and is satisfied in him.

That's true godliness.

That's true greatness.

If you want to be great in the kingdom of God, you got to be the servant of all.

And this is a kind of greatness a husband can never achieve because of the leadership role God has placed him in.

There is a type of greatness that is given to women in the role that God has called them to play, both in marriage, but also just as leaders

And biology, right?

We'll see this in a second.

Paul calls women the weaker vessel.

There's a couple reasons for that, but I'm going to head it myself, so stay tuned.

So that's the positive side, right?

That there's a kind of greatness, there's a kind of beauty of life that is uniquely given to women as they hope in God and the roles that he's called them to play in this life, and that's also expressed in serving others.

But he also says, you know, so older widows, be like them.

These younger widows that are in the Ephesian church, and this is not a slam against younger women in general.

There are some tendencies here that Paul's pointing out.

But these are these specific younger widows that were in the Ephesian church.

Say, don't be like them.

And he describes them in verses 6 and 11 through 15.

He says, but she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives.

And then going to 11 to 15, he says, but refuse to enroll younger widows for when their passions draw them away from Christ, they desire to marry and so incur condemnation for having abandoned their former faith.

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 would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households and give the adversary no occasion for slander for some have already strayed after Satan.

So, all right, I don't have time to break all this down, but the short of it is that some of these young women were following the false teachers that we already had seen in chapter one and chapter three, and they were proving themselves to be unbelievers.

The way that they were proving themselves to be unbelievers, the bad fruit that was manifesting, was one, self-indulgently relying on the support of others rather than seeking to be useful, right?

So they were...

making this commitment, they were telling the church that they could or that they wouldn't marry again so that the church would enroll them in this ongoing regular financial support rather than looking for a husband right away, which would have been their means at that time of providing and being provided for.

And then later when they felt like it, they would break that commitment that they had made to the church.

They weren't making good use of their free time.

Rather, they're going house to house, gossiping and stirring up division and all kinds of trouble.

So Paul's basically saying here, don't make a commitment you're not gonna keep.

It's better that you get married and stay busy helping others and serving others.

And this was a demonstration, this lack of concern for the resources of the church

Also, this lack of concern for truthfulness and fidelity and this lack of concern for others and not being useful to others in the community demonstrated a lack of a regenerate heart.

Because God loves, right?

God loves when members of his family, especially women, care for others from a place of dependence.

All right.

Real quick, application.

Application.

Men, did you notice Peter's application of these principles to us in 1 Peter 3.7?

He says, likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

Living with your wife in an understanding way at least means, I think it means more than this, but it at least means living with an awareness of the position that she willingly put herself in in choosing to marry you and if God provides, bury your children.

Your wife has willingly, your mom, kids, has willingly put herself in a vulnerable, more dependent position in choosing to marry her husband and to bear children and take on the responsibility with her husband, but take on the responsibility of children.

Weaker vessel here, like we said, doesn't mean less capable.

It doesn't mean not as intelligent.

It means more vulnerable and dependent.

Women in general are in this position physically, just generally speaking.

God has designed us differently, right?

And given us different body types.

But wives and mothers voluntarily take on this position as the weaker, more vulnerable vessel in submitting to their husbands and bearing and caring for kids.

And Peter says that we...

as a church, as husbands and children first, but as a church, need to honor this self-sacrifice and the way that they hope in God in taking on this risk.

This is beautiful.

The weaker vessel is a word for fine china.

Fine china is more vulnerable, but it's beautiful.

And in this case, the beauty is wrapped up in the courage of

to take on this more dependent position and put their hope in God.

So men, kids, we need to honor our mothers today, recognizing the position that they're in that we often, if we're honest, take advantage of.

But women, Paul addresses women, so I'm going to address women today.

You know, a lot of times we get to these Mother's Day, Father's Day sermons, and it's like, men, honor your wives.

And then the fathers get it on the other side when you come to Father's Day.

Step up and lead your house, right?

So we're usually just yelling at the men when it comes to these things.

But Paul doesn't do that, so I'm not going to do that today.

We're going to talk to you ladies as well.

Women, don't fight or despise dependency.

all of the messaging about womanhood today, all of it across the board, the shows we watch, the ads, everything is preaching to you that a dependent life, any form of dependency, any shade of dependency in your life is bad, and you need to be independent financially, bodily, emotionally, in every way possible.

It's not true, first of all, as we talked about, we're all desperately dependent on God, but

It is more felt and real in the roles that we embrace and the position that we take on.

And this passage, these principles are telling us not to fight it, not to despise it when God calls you to it.

We're all desperately dependent on God.

Some of us feel it and demonstrate it more at times.

But don't be afraid.

Don't be afraid to willingly embrace years of vulnerability and dependence.

Your hope is in God and steps of faith like this please him.

Remember what Jesus said at the temple in Mark 12?

And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box.

Many rich people put in large sums.

And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny.

And he called his disciples to him and said to them, truly I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box.

For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.

What she gave, she gave from a vulnerable, dependent position.

And what she gave was more, right?

It was greater than the large sums given out of excess.

If you want to be great, truly beautiful in God's eyes, take generous risks in caring for others because you know that God has cared for you in Christ and that he will care for you now and for eternity.

And I think we see this beautifully on display in our women and especially in our mothers.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, would you reorient, recalibrate our instincts and our desires?

Lord, would you teach us to admire true greatness?

What Jesus called great when he was among us.

Lord, that if we want to be great in your kingdom, we must be the servant of all.

And Lord, you exalt the downtrodden,

You lift up the lowly.

Lord, you care for the vulnerable and dependent.

And Lord, you've called all of us to recognize our dependence on you.

But Lord, you've called some of us to demonstrate that more tangibly.

in different ways.

And Lord, we're thankful for our mothers who sacrifice time and energy and opportunities.

And Lord, there's a list of things that we often thank our moms for.

But Lord, today we want to thank them especially for taking the risk, for putting themselves in a more vulnerable position

to love their husbands, and to care for their family.

Lord, and we trust that you are caring for them.

Lord, we trust that...

even now that there'll be a time when they'll be exalted and lifted up and that you will honor their sacrifice.

But Lord, we just pray that you would give us eyes to see and even the words to say this morning to honor who they are and what they've done for us.

They reflect your glory and your greatness and we thank you for them.

Pray all this in Jesus' name.