

Exodus Chapter 20 v 12

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Preacher: Peter Robinson

[0 : 0 0] There's so many things, oh Lord our God, that excite us as we get to this time of the year. We look forward to opportunities for renewed friendship with relatives, renewed opportunities to refresh and be relaxed and to have time of work. And we look forward, yes Lord, to singing carols and sharing presents and all sorts of things that we do year on year. But again, oh Lord, we pray that this Christmas time may especially be a time in which we are drawn to Jesus, drawn to think evermore of what it meant for him, your son, the eternal everlasting God, to come into our world with all of its pain and sorrow and difficulty and to take upon himself a human body and nature so that he shared in everything that we share in. Shared in the joys, yes, but the sorrows, the laughter, but also the tears. Shared in all the ugliness of our world, its pain. And yet in every way he was perfect, the only one who has ever lived, oh Lord, without sin. But especially because he came to face the cross, to suffer in our place, to bear our sin and all its blame and guilt and shame and punishment and to win for us, to buy for us, to purchase for us full forgiveness, full pardon for all our sins, to win for us the loving embrace of you, our heavenly God, to bring us back to yourself who were lost, to give us sight as we sang who were blind, to give us life, oh Lord, who were dead in trespasses and sins. Oh, we thank you that, Lord Jesus, you did come. Nothing could hold you back. Nothing could keep you from, in one sense, giving yourself for us, that we might share in your sonship, that we might become children of God. We pray, oh Lord, again, that as we think about these things, that we may know in our own heart of hearts that we have such a faith in you, Lord Jesus, as the one who came to rescue and save us, that we may be able to speak of you, Jesus, as my Saviour and my Lord, that this Christmas may be the most blessed Christmas we've ever known. For the first time in our lives, we know what it is to be born of God, to receive newness of life and to know that, oh Lord, we are indeed your children.

Lord, be with us now in this time as we think again about who you are and what you've done for us, as we consider again your word, its commandments, its truth, the blessing that you have for us.

Help us to hear and to receive from you and to give to you in response the love of our hearts, the worship and praise of our lives. For we ask these things in and through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and King. Amen.

1 Timothy in chapter 5, a passage that may not immediately spring to mind when we think about the fourth commandment, which we're going to be looking at in a little while, but as we shall see later has bearing and relevance. So 1 Timothy in chapter 5, beginning at verse 1 and reading through to verse 16. Page 1193, if you've got the church Bible, page 1193, 1 Timothy 5, beginning at verse 1.

Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exalt him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters with absolute purity. Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need. But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn, first of all, to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God. The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help.

[4 : 38] But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. Give the people these instructions so that no one may be open to blame. Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith, has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever.

No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over 60, has been faithful to her husband, and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the Lord's people, helping those in trouble, and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds.

As for younger widows, do not put them on such a list, for when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, they want to marry. Thus they bring judgment on themselves, because they've broken their first pledge. Besides, they get into the habit of being idle, going about from house to house.

Not only do they become idlers, but also busybodies, who talk nonsense, saying things they ought not to. So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes, and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander. Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan.

For any woman who is a believer, has widows in her care, she should continue to help them, and not let the church be burdened with them, so that the church can help those widows who are really in need. We're going to come to a time of prayer together. There's several needs, several sad things have happened during the week internationally. There was a terrible fire in America just the other night, where 40 or so people, I believe, had been killed at that club. That terrible plane crash in Colombia with one of the Brazilian football teams, and many, many people there, again killed.

[6 : 43] And then closer to home, many of us who know Ben and Liz Griffin very well will have received their newsletter, telling the very sad news that two of their very good friends in Burkino Faso have died.

One is a lady called Caroline Berg, who helped and worked with the English school for many, many years. And that's just great sadness, but what is particularly sad for Ben and Liz is that a blasé, that was, he was the best friend of Ben, a Burkino man who had been a Christian and was a translator for Ben in many of the villages and many of the things that he did, at the age of 39, died of dengue fever.

He leaves a wife, Elizabeth, and two children. And that's really hit Ben and Liz very hard, and they ask for prayer particularly, as they tell their own children, who were very close to a blasé in his family as well. So we face a world at times where it all seems very bleak, doesn't it?

But that is the time when especially we can turn to the God of all comfort. We can turn to the God who has power and grace, mercy, tenderness, the God who hears and answers prayer. So let's pray for these matters, these people, some we know nothing about, many of them we don't know anything about, but let us pray to the God who knows them only too well. Father, as we come to you again, we come, Lord, with sadness. We come, Lord, with sorrow. Lord, that's not unusual because we know that in this world, in this life, even you, Lord Jesus, promised your disciples you will have trouble and sorrows and tribulations. But he said to them also, be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world. We know that, Lord Jesus, you are the one who is involved in your world intimately, personally.

There are things that happen around about us that we do not understand, that we question and ask why. And yet, Lord, ultimately, there is no answer except for us to put our faith and trust in you, the God who is able to bring joy out of grief, the God who is able to bring resurrection life out of death. And so we pray that you would particularly be close to those who mourn and grieve. We think of the families of those who are still missing in America after this fire. We pray, oh Lord, that in your mercy, again, that you would help them to find their comfort in you. We pray, oh Lord, for those who are mourning in Brazil, particularly over so many of their friends, teammates, loved ones who killed in this plane crash. And again, we thank you that there are many in Brazil who know you and love you and Lord who trust in you. We pray, Lord, that there, again, oh Lord our God, that you would not only find answers to why the plane crash took place for those who are searching and investigating, but also, again, especially, that you would bring comfort to those who mourn. We do pray, Lord, for Ben and Liz. We thank you for them and for the children. And we pray that you would help them at this particularly sad time when they have lost dear friends in Burkino. We pray, Lord, for the family of Carolyn. We pray, Lord, that you would help them and comfort them. Thank you that she knows you and knew you as her saviour and Lord, and so we can rejoice with her that she is with Christ, which is much, much better than any life in this world.

[10 : 27] And we do pray for a bless whose family, for Elizabeth and her children. Lord, we can't really grasp how shocking, how saddening this must be. Lord, we know that she knows you and trusts you. She knows that a bless is with you. Thank you for his years of service and faithfulness. Lord, in your goodness, in your will, Lord, you have called him to yourself. And again, we don't fully understand why at this time, but we pray for the family. Please, oh Lord, for the children, oh Lord, you are their heavenly father. Comfort them, surround them. Lord, give them your peace, we pray. We thank you again, our God, that you sent your son into this world. You sent him in, again, as we've been reminded and thought, to know and experience the sorrows, the griefs, the pain of this world. We thank you that we do not have a God who is one who lives in an ivory tower, one who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but one who's been tested, tried, and hurt in one sense, in every way, just as we are. And so we pray again, oh Lord, that you, even at this time of year, when many will be struggling, may you draw near and bring that peace, that comfort that comes through the good news of Jesus Christ, the one who died and rose again and gives us life everlasting. Be with us as we come to your word and help us to understand what it is you're saying to us. Open our ears, our minds, our hearts, that, oh Lord, your word may have effect and bring about in our lives glory and praise to your name, that we may be a blessing to others, Lord, in this world, in this town, in this community. Lord, as we share with them the only answer to every problem, the answer of Jesus

Christ, Saviour and King. Help us then, we pray, in his name. Amen. So we're considering the fifth of the Ten Commandments. I'll read it again for us from Exodus in chapter 20, verse 12.

Honour your father and your mother so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you. If there is ever a time when this commandment was relevant, then surely it is for today's generation. If we think of the issues of our day, we think of all that is happening in our society at this time, then this commandment, as with all the others, has direct relevance, application, importance, and truth. Earlier this week, I watched a documentary on the television looking into why one in three, one in three teenage girls suffers from some form of depression or mental illness. One in three teenage girls.

We mentioned last week, or the week before, about how Christian Institute has brought our attention to the fact that the government is looking at proposals to force all primary schools to teach sex education to children from the age of five, with quite graphic illustrations.

Government statistics for 2016, which look at family life and the state of the nation, as it were, show that almost a quarter of all families with dependent children are single-parent families.

[13 : 59] It's 25% of all families with children are single-parent families, and 86% of those are single-moms with children.

Then we turn to the other end of the generation. Who's going to care for the elderly? Who's going to pay for our parents and grandparents?

That's a great debate in government, local, and national. Who's going to care for us when we're old?

So this fifth commandment is indeed relevant. Relevant because it shows us again how our relationship with God affects our relationship with one another.

It's the very first, isn't it, of what we might call this second section of the commandments, which relates directly to how we deal with one another. The first four were how we relate to God, how we know God and worship Him, how we relate to Him and speak about Him and honor Him.

[15 : 02] And those four are important. They are the four most important commandments, that they are the ones that are least remembered, because they lay the foundation for the other six.

See, until we have a right relationship with God, we are unable to have a right relationship with others. It all flows from Him. It all begins with Him.

If we love God as the first and greatest commandment, with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, then we shall be able to love our neighbor as ourselves, the second great commandment.

But we may be thinking, well, why does God begin this section on relationships with one another, with this one, honor your father and mother? Surely it would be more sensible or more important to say, you shall not murder.

That's really important. Or you shall not commit adultery. Or you shall not lie. Or you shall not steal. They're the things that really seem to be of primary importance. Taking a life.

[16 : 02] But no, he says, honor your father and your mother. Why does God put that first? Well, simply we know that families are the bedrock for any society, aren't they?

We know that healthy families mean healthy communities and healthy societies and healthy nations. We know that families are very, very important. And God knows that too.

Because as we've seen all the way through, every commandment reveals something about the very character, the mindset, the personality of God. And God is a God for families. God is a God who, all the way through the Bible, all the way through history, has made covenants with families.

Whenever God has intervened into somebody's life, it has always been with them and their family. And so we think of Noah, the great flood. God spoke to Noah in Genesis 9.

He says, God said to Noah and to his sons with him, I will establish my covenant with you and your descendants after you. Family.

[17 : 08] That most famous, of course, covenant with Abraham, the father of the faith. Again, that was particularly with families. God says to Abraham, I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.

Family. And when we go into the New Testament, we come to the day of Pentecost, the preaching of Peter, the very end of the sermon. Peter's sermon, he applies it to the people in this way.

He says, the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, for all whom the Lord your God will call. And when we go through the book of Acts, which, of course, follows on from the day of Pentecost, we see that promise being fulfilled again and again in families.

And so we have Cornelius, the Roman centurion, and his family. We see Lydia, the first convert, in one sense, in mainland Europe, and her family, and, of course, the Philippian jailer and his family.

That's why for many people, many Christians, they see that God's covenant includes their children, just as it did with the Old Testament. And why many Christians give the sign of the covenant in the New Testament to their children, baptism.

[18 : 33] In the Old Testament, it was circumcision, as we know, given to Abraham and his descendants, baptism to the Christian and to their children. God has a special interest in families, a special concern for families.

He uses families to fulfill his saving purposes in the world. And we see that particularly as we draw near to Christmas, because we see, of course, that God honors families by placing his son within a family, didn't he?

When the Lord Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, it was quite possible for God, if he had chosen to, for her to be a single mom and bring up Jesus as a single mom.

Jesus could have been born into being an orphan. In any possible way, it was possible for the Son of God to come into this world to be the saviour of sinners, but God chose to do it within a family, with a father figure in Joseph, with Mary, and with, in fact, a large number of brothers and sisters.

Mark tells us there are at least four half-brothers that Jesus had, and we don't know how many, but several half-sisters. And it's within that family that we see the Lord Jesus Christ keeping this commandment.

[19 : 49] Because remember, all these commandments not only point to the very character of God, they point to the Lord Jesus Christ and him keeping them and fulfilling them, just as he said he would. That he came into this world not to abolish God's law, but to fulfill God's law.

So in the family, the Lord Jesus Christ kept this commandment. He honoured his parents. If you read in Luke, chapter 2, there's that wonderful incident where Jesus and his family go to Jerusalem for the Passover, and somehow Jesus gets separated from his parents, and they have to go and find him, and he's in the temple, and he's answering these credible questions.

He's only 12 before these great leaders. We're told after that, though, that then he went down to Nazareth and was obedient to his parents.

There's something particularly in the life of Jesus, I think, that points out how he fulfills this commandment in the most wonderful way. And it's from the cross.

On the cross, the Lord Jesus Christ showed such love and respect and honour for his mother that it's a real example to us. In John, in chapter 19, verses 26 and 27, Jesus has been crucified, and around the cross are not only his mother, but also other members of his family and friends as well.

[21 : 15] We're told that near the cross stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. And here's Jesus.

Remember, Jesus has been crucified. He's already been flogged, beaten, crown of thorns upon his head. He's hours away from his death. He's already spoken several things from the cross about forgiveness, spoken to the thief, assuring him of paradise.

And yet here at the cross, in all that pain and agony, as we're told, when Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved, which we know was John, standing nearby, he said to her, woman.

It's not a derogatory term. It's in Jesus' culture, and it was just the way of addressing somebody. Woman. Here is your son.

And to the disciple, here is your mother. And from that time on, this disciple took her into his home. His thoughts were for his mother. His thoughts were for her.

[22 : 17] As she suffered and endured the heartbreak of losing her eldest son in this awful, terrible way, it was not thoughts for himself, it was thoughts for her. How he could honour her.

How he could love her. And of course, our Lord Jesus Christ, in his life, not only honoured his earthly parents, but of course, he particularly honoured his heavenly father.

In that throughout his life, it was his sole purpose to obey and to keep his father's will. In fact, when his disciples came to him in John and chapter 4, when they wanted to bring him food, he said to them, my food is to do the will of him who sent me and finish his work.

And our Lord Jesus Christ was obedient to his heavenly father's will all the way up even to the point of his death upon the cross. For we're told in Mark 14, on that night before his death, as he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, he prayed, Abba, Father.

Abba is daddy in Aramaic. The most personal name that you can call your father, Abba, Father. He prays to God. Everything is possible for you.

[23 : 31] Take this cup, that's the cup of suffering away from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will. So our Lord Jesus Christ kept his father's perfect will and honoured him completely to the very point of death upon the cross.

Because it was the father's will that he should die for us. The father's will that he should suffer in our place. And because our Lord Jesus Christ kept that commandment and because he kept the father's will, we notice that he enjoyed the very special promise which is attached to that commandment.

Because that commandment comes with a promise. Paul reminds us of that as he brings that commandment to bear to the New Testament church. He says this, Children, obey your parents in the Lord for this is right.

Honour your father and mother which is the first commandment with a promise so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth. Our Lord Jesus Christ kept that commandment and received a wonderful blessing from it.

We're told in Philippians 2 what happened. He humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross. Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name above every name.

[25 : 02] Our Lord Jesus Christ was restored to the honour and glory that he had before he humbled himself by the Father. There was blessing that came from his obedience.

And again, this is so important for us to recognise that the commandments that God has given us are always because he wants to do us good. The commandments that God gives us to obey are always because they contain a blessing for us.

The commandments that God gives us always flow from his heart of love because he wants the best. They are not the laws of some potent dictator, some person who loves to control and manipulate and keep people under his power.

No, the commandments of God flow from his grace, his mercy, his salvation. It's so foolish, isn't it, for us and for many others as well to look at the commandments of God or the laws of God or the word of God and say it's a burden, it's inconvenient, it's a nuisance, we want to throw these things off and be free.

That's what we thought at the very start. The cause of the very sorrows, the cause of the problems, the cause of the griefs that we endure in this life on the whole can be traced back to our disobedience of God's word, our turning away from what he wants and turning to what we want.

- [26 : 27] When we look at our own lives, we look at perhaps some of the things that have happened and the sorrows that we've endured in various ways and circumstances, can we trace them back to the fact that it's because we chose to go that way, we chose to do what we wanted, we chose to turn our back on God's word and his commandments and we've suffered the fallouts, we've suffered the consequences.

Our creator God, our maker has given us his word, his commandments with promises and blessing. So I want to think about this commandment then for ourselves today, particularly as Paul in Ephesians 6 and if you want to turn there that might be helpful as well, it's page 1177 in the church bible, page 1177.

So we understand and know that this commandment is relevant for us, it's part of God's word to us in the New Testament as much as in the Old, it flows through, it follows through. But I want us to pick up on what Paul says here and apply it in a couple of ways and also pick up on some of the implications that this commandment brings, not just to children but to parents as well.

Now remember as I've already said that God has given us his commandments because they are for our good but he's given us those commandments because ultimately the sum of all the commandments says the Bible is love.

That's why remember the first greatest commandment is love the Lord your God, the second great commandment is love your neighbour as yourself. And so this commandment is about love. Paul writes to the Romans and tells them love is the fulfilment of the law.

- [28 : 16] If we love then we're going to get it all right. So how does this commandment affect children? When does this commandment affect children or those of us who have parents?

Put it that way, those of us who have parents. How are we to love our parents as God has commanded? Well first of all let me address those who are at home.

So if you're a child and you're living at home with your parents it doesn't matter what age you are if you're living with your parents you're still a child of that parent and within their home.

Okay? We live in a world of course where there's a distinction and the law says of course when you're 18 you're an adult you have complete liberty and freedom to do what you want.

It used to be 21. By the time I probably retire it'll be about 12. You can do what you like because you know everything when you're 18. You know exactly what you need to do so you don't need to obey anybody or do anything you just do what you like.

- [29 : 17] No. The commandment of God here is to all people who are under the authority of their parents who are still at home. Okay? So you may be 19 you may be 25 you may be even 30.

If you're at home and you're living with your parents then you are still to honour them in this way and keep this commandment. Okay. So what does Paul say? Children obey your parents in the Lord for that is right.

In the Lord means in the sense that they keep God's commandment. In other words if a parent says to a child you shall not go to church you shall not read your Bible you shall not talk about Jesus that is not a commandment to be kept.

even though in Colossians in chapter 3 verse 20 Paul adds they are to obey their parents in everything. In the Lord gives that clarification it is only as God who is the first authority is kept as well.

As I said before Jesus is our supreme example. Here he is the very son of God who has come into the world at the age of 12 we're told he went back to Nazareth and he was obedient to his parents.

[30 : 31] He's our example in all things. Now here's the problem we have sinful hearts even as children. So it's not easy is it?

It's not easy to obey our parents when they are caring for us and looking after us at home. It's not easy when they tell us to do something we don't want to do because ultimately within our hearts whether we're young or old there is a sinful inclination to do what we want.

This is God's declaration of humanity in Genesis 8. Every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood. And one of the things that many people say nowadays is of course well of course the children they're innocent.

Children are not innocent in the sense that they are not born without sin. Children don't just learn to be sinful they do learn that and if we give them example they'll follow it.

But children within their hearts are born with a sinful nature like every single one of us who is older as well. A nature that militates against being told what to do.

[31 : 36] You know that yourselves if you've had a child or a grandchild and a toddler no matter what age they are from a very young age they begin to be rebellious don't they? No stop making that noise banging the pan with the spoon.

Bang, bang, bang, bang. Stop it. Bang, bang. There's a rebelliousness. They want to do it. It comes from a sinful heart. In fact when Paul writes to the Christians in Rome he talks about how as the world has turned away from God how the world has rejected God as its authority thrown off his commandments and he lists several things that the world does which shows that its heart is sinful.

He talks about envy and murder about people being God haters but he includes this disobedience to parents in that list of the awful crimes of humanity in that list of the terrible fruit as it were consequences of disobeying God is that disobedience to parents.

So the question is how can a child keep this commandment? How can any of us keep this commandment or any other commandments when they go against our sinful nature which is always to do what we want rather than what God wants or what those in authority over us want?

Well it's simply this. The only way we can keep this commandment whether we are young or old is that we are born again of the Holy Spirit. It's only the Holy Spirit who enables us to submit to Christ and therefore to one another as Paul writes himself just in a few verses earlier Ephesians 5 submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

[33 : 20] submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. That's why we have to get the Christ relationship right. That's why when we face God's commandments they show us that we cannot please God we cannot keep his commandments we need to be those who are born again of the Spirit whether that's young or old.

So children try to obey the commandments of the parents they try to keep them outwardly at least but they can never keep them inwardly apart from the Holy Spirit's help.

There will always be that rebellion there will always be that anger there will always be that resentment. So let me encourage you again dear friends please pray for the early conversion of children.

Pray for your children I know that you do pray for your grandchildren and if you have any great grandchildren pray for the children that you know are part of this fellowship pray that at an early age they may be born again of the Spirit of God.

that they may be able to keep the commandment that they may be able to obey their parents as God wants. Notice again what Paul says here that there's a blessing involved in it isn't there?

[34 : 37] Honor your father and mother which is the first commandment of the promise so that it may go well with you that you may enjoy long life on the earth. Again we just see that don't we again and again young people sadly particularly who break the chains of their parents from a young age and they go their own way and what do we find that again and again they bring destruction and harm and sorrow onto themselves.

God's commandments are for your good. To obey your parents is for your blessing for your good. God has given you a promise it will go well with you.

It will go well with you. Let me just follow that up because we see here in Ephesians 6 that also verse 4 Paul then speaks to parents, Christian parents.

The question is really this, am I a Christian parent whose children will want to honor me? Am I such a Christian parent my children will want to honor me?

And Paul speaks here do fathers and that refers to, I would take that as fathers and mothers, parents, do not exasperate your children, instead bring them up in the training and instruction of the law.

[36 : 00] In Colossians he speaks about embittering our children. Is my, so what can we do? Well we can of course exasperate our children by disciplining them in anger rather than in love.

I believe that discipline is vital in a family. God believes it's vital. He disciplines us as his children, Hebrews 12, you can read about that. But if I discipline my children in anger rather than in love, whether I lose my temper with them verbally or even physically, then I'm going to embitter them.

Particularly if I punish them for something that they've done wrong out of proportion with what they've done. There needs to be discipline which is born of love and born with a purpose not of punishment in the sense of harming but rather punishment in the sense of teaching.

So as we know we've often used the illustration when a child is by something that is hot and you say don't touch it and they do touch it, not only do they get the burn of their hand, it teaches them but it needs to be disciplined.

It needs to be, no that's not right, you can see that that's wrong, it's not going to be good for you. But we can also embitter our children as well by always finding fault in them. Do we set too high a standard for our children?

[37 : 30] Do we expect them to be something that they aren't? Do we expect them to be adults when they're still children? Or do we find fault in them?

It's everything that they bring to us, never quite good enough, never quite acceptable. They don't receive praise, they don't receive appreciation, they need to, we all need it, children especially.

Again the law of God includes mercy and grace. So dear parents, pray for parents, pray for Christian parents.

There's something else as well which really covers this as well. Do I embitter my children or do I, as Paul puts it there, exasperate them because of hypocrisy in my life?

Inconsistency in the way that I speak and the way that I live. I call myself a Christian but my life and my words make that false confession in their eyes.

[38 : 41] You see again as parents we are those who are to set the example that our children should follow. If we are saints on Sunday but scoundrels on Monday, will they have time for God?

The God that we say they should follow, the God they say that they should trust or that we say that we should trust. Rather we are to positively nourish them. And notice that Paul says there instead bringing them up, that's nourishing them.

That's the same word that he uses when he speaks about husbands nourishing their wives in the training and instruction of the Lord. We're to clearly care for and provide the physical needs of those children in our care, provide for them home and food and all those sort of things, but we're also to provide for their souls.

Children are soulish creatures. They have a spirit and a soul as we do. We mustn't neglect the soul but just concentrate on the body and so we can as parents overplay the physical by giving them treats and lovely good things to enjoy and extra presents at Christmas and so on, but actually we may starve them of God's word.

We may withhold from them the blessings of good fellowship in God's people, spiritual nourishment. Children obey your parents in the Lord. Parents don't exasperate your children.

[40 : 04] I want to take this to the other stage and I've hinted at it already in the beginning. What about those of us who are grown up, at least physically, and our parents are older, particularly when they're elderly?

How do we continue to honour our parents? For some of us this may be very relevant for today, for some of us that may be very relevant in the years to come.

And again I think here we need to look at the example of the Lord Jesus. The example of the Lord Jesus there from the cross that we looked at in John 19, John 19, 25 to 27, we see there an example of what it means to honour our parents in old age.

As I said before, Jesus goes out of his way, he's on the cross, he's dying, his thoughts are concerning the ministry that he is finishing, the work he is accomplishing in dying for our sins, but he's not stopped loving, honouring his mother.

And there's two things that he does for her, two things that he provides for her which I believe every Christian person should seek to provide for their own parents as they get older.

[41 : 20] First of all, he provides for her practically. Notice he says, woman, here is your son, the disciple, here is your mother. From that time on, his disciple took her into his home.

He was entrusting his mother into the care, the practical care of someone who would feed her, home her, look after her. We're almost certain, of course, that Joseph has died many years before, and now Jesus, the eldest son, whose responsibility it was to care for his parents, is now dying too.

So we are to practically care for our parents. And that's the reason I read from 1 Timothy 5, and I'm sure for many of you as I read through 1 Timothy 5, it was a little bit uncomfortable in lots of different ways, but here is one verse which particularly I feel is like an arrow to the heart.

Verse 8, anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. That's harsh, isn't it?

Well, that's painful, isn't it? If you're a Christian, there's a responsibility, a duty of care, a duty of obedience to the commandment to care for those of our parents, our relatives who are unable to care for themselves.

[42 : 41] Now, of course, in the day that Paul is writing, there is no NHS, there is no state care, there are no nursing homes, it was up to a person's family to look after them, provide for them, practically for home and food and clothing.

In fact, what Timothy is talking about is how when that person had absolutely nobody to look after them, then it was the church's care of love to do that. And that's, in fact, this list of widows he's talking about.

Real widows, or widows really in need to be cared for by the church. But he makes it clear that widows, and I would include therefore all those who are elderly and unable to provide for themselves, who are parents, are to be cared for.

Paul says, verse 3, give proper recognition, but that really is the word honour. Give honour to those widows who are in need. So here's the challenge to me and to many of you, perhaps.

Am I honouring my elderly parents with the care that they are receiving? It doesn't mean that they have to be in my own home, doesn't mean that they have to be under my own roof necessarily, but am I really showing them the care and love they deserve?

[43 : 53] Am I loving them with the best I can love them with? And then the second thing that Jesus, I believe, provides for Mary is not just practically, but emotionally.

In other words, he places her somewhere where she knows not only is John going to provide for her food and clothing and so on, but she's going to receive love. She's going to be loved.

She's going to be emotionally supported and strengthened and helped. That plays a big part in honouring and loving our elderly parents. And I believe those are in the church.

If we have those in the church who are widows in need and widows in need, then we have a responsibility to love them and to care for them as part of honouring and keeping this commandment. We are to ensure that they feel loved, wanted, make sure they have the support and friendship that they need.

Make sure that they have the spiritual support, just as we care for and nourish our own children, so we are to nourish and care for our parents as two. Honour your father and mother, says the Lord.

[45 : 00] And there's a promise of good and blessing when we do that. commandments of God point in the very sensitive parts of our lives.

They illuminate the things that we try to avoid in society in our day. But they are given for our good. good. Not the law that binds, but the law that liberates us to live out lives of love as Christ lived.

Lovely. Let's sing together our final hymn as we bring our time to a close. It's number 807. 807.

Teach me your way, O Lord. Teach me your way. Amen. Amen. Amen. Teach me your way.

Teach me your way. Teach me your way. Teach me your way. Teach me your way. Teach me your way. Help me to hold her right.

[46 : 29] All my weakness is my sight. Bring me with heavenly light. Teach me your way.

Teach me your way.

Teach me your way. Teach me your way. Teach me your way. Teach me your way. Why as my life shall last, teach me your way.

There I am, because teach me your way. Until the race is run, until the journey's done, Until the crown is run, teach me your way.

Amen. Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant, brought back from the dead, our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will.

[48 : 02] And may he work in us. And may he work in us what is pleasing to him. Through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. Amen. Thank you.