

I Thessalonians 5:12-13

First RPC Durham

I. The Christian's Duty Toward Their Elders**A. Exposition of the Text**

- 1) *To recognize those who labor among you*
- 2) *To esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake* (Eph 4:11-13)

B. Doctrines from the Text

- 1) It is the duty of every Christian household to be joined to the Church (Ex 18; Num 10:29, 32; Jer 35:19).
- 2) It is the duty of every Christian to be under the right government of the Church
- 3) It is the duty of every Christian to know how the Church is to be governed
- 4) We love our elders because we love Christ (Mt 28:18-20; Jn 10:11-15)

C. Answering Objections to the Text

- 1) *Objection 1:* But I do not need the Visible Church to be a Christian! (Rom 12:5)
- 2) *Objection 2:* But I have been hurt by elders before, how could I trust them now!
 - a) It is a grave thing for elders to abuse their authority (Ezk 34:2b)
 - b) Proper church government safeguards against such abuse.
 - c) Yet, Synods and Councils may and do err (WCF 31.4)
 - d) Experiences and emotions do not negate God's commands.

D. Uses from the Text

- 1) We are to love Christ!
- 2) We are to love the Church!
- 3) Be faithful in your duties toward your elders (Heb 13:7, 17)

II. The Elders' Duty Toward The Church**A. Exposition of the Text**

- 1) *To labor among you . . . to work* — The work of prayer (1:2), the Word (2:13), shepherding (2:11), and love (2:8)
- 2) *To be over you in the Lord* (Mt 16:19; WCF 31.5)
- 3) *To admonish*

B. Doctrines from the Text

- 1) There is to be a plurality of elders (Phil 1:1)
- 2) There is to be parity among the elders
- 3) The elders are to be active, not passive, in shepherding
- 4) We love the elder's work because we love the Triune God

C. Answering Objections to the Text

- 1) *Objection from the Elders:* But what do I do if the sheep are unruly? (Lk 15:4-6; Jn 17:17)
- 2) *Objection from the Members:* But what do I do if I disagree with the rule of my elders? (1 Pt 4:8)

D. Uses from the Text

- 1) Elders, be faithful in your duties (1 Pt 5:2-4)
- 2) Men, consider if you have a desire for such work.
- 3) Congregation, encourage your elders in their work.

III. The Christian's Duty Toward One Another**A. Exposition of the Text**

- 1) *Be at peace among yourselves*
 - a) What does it mean to be at peace among yourselves?
 - b) What produces peace within the Church? (Rom 12:3, 9-10; 1 Thes 5:17)
 - c) Peace in the Church reflects our union with Christ.
 - d) Peace in the Church reflects our being the Body of Christ.
 - e) We are to pray for the peace of the Church (Psa 122:6-8)
 - f) We are to enjoy the peace of the Church (Psa 133:1)

B. Doctrines from the Text

- 1) The Church is at enmity with the flesh, the world and the devil (1 Thes 5:8; Psa 23:5a; Rom 14:17).
- 2) We have peace with one another because we have peace with God. (Col 3:15a)

C. Answering Objections to the Text

- 1) *Objection 1:* How can I have peace when there is such a strong personality difference? (Eph 5:21)
- 2) *Objection 2:* How can I have peace when there is disagreement?

D. Uses from the Text

- 1) Consider the forgiveness, peace you have in Christ (Psa 85:10)
- 2) Be at peace among yourselves.
- 3) Look forward to the peace we will have in Heaven (Psa 23:6)