

Introduction to the New Testament History and Literature

Lecture 19: The "Household" Paul: the Pastorals Transcript

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Overview

In the undisputed Pauline epistles, marriage is seen as a way to extirpate sexual desire - neither as a means for procreation nor as the preferred social status. The Pastoral Epistles, written to instruct in the pastoring of churches and appointing of church offices, presents quite un-Pauline attitudes. In the Pastoral Epistles, the church, rather than an ecclesia, becomes a household, a specifically patriarchal structure in which men hold offices and women are not to have authority over them. They present a pro-family, anti-ascetic message in contrast to the Pauline epistles.

Marriage, Family, Sex, and Women in Paul's Letters

- [1] *Professor Dale Martin:* What we're doing this week is extending our conversation we started last week about how was Paul used as a figure in early Christianity. Today we're going to talk about the Pastoral Epistles, which is I and II Timothy and Titus, and then next time we'll talk about The Acts of Paul and Thecla because these are two practically opposite ways of interpreting Paul and using Paul that came about probably in the second century. The Pastoral Epistles are called "pastoral" because it presents Paul as writing to Timothy and Titus, two of his followers, but he's telling them how to be good pastors of a church. In fact he's also doing something like almost acting like they're going to become bishops; they are also supposed to be appointing other people as pastors of churches. We call these the Pastoral Epistles because it presents Paul as himself serving in a sort of pastoral role for his churches and assigning Timothy and Titus pastoral roles for his churches also, and establishing leadership positions, what kind of leadership structures he wants to go on in the churches.
- [2] Most of us scholars believe that these letters are pseudonymous. We don't believe Paul wrote them. There has been some question in the last several years that maybe the actual historical Paul wrote II Timothy because II

Timothy looks sort of like a last will and testament of Paul that he may have written in prison. But I don't tend to buy that. I tend to group all three of them together as being probably by the same author and all being pseudonymous. Why do we think they're pseudonymous? Well again, as we saw with Ephesians and Colossians, the writing style in these letters is very different from the seven letters that scholars all agree Paul actually wrote, so the writing style is a big issue. As I'll show today there are a lot of ways of seeing that these letters simply presuppose a different stage in early Christianity. They don't look like they're from the more primitive sort of time of when Paul was actually founding churches. The theology looks different, the church structure looks different, as I'll talk about, positions on the household, on marriage, on slavery, on family, on women, all of these things are different.

- [3] I'm using the Pastoral Epistles in this lecture as one illustration of how Christianity changes in different trajectories. One trajectory becomes very much pro-household. The traditional Roman style or Greco-Roman family is promoted as the Christian way for families to be and even the church itself is molded to look like a household with a paterfamilias, the head of the household on top, women below that, children and slaves below that. When we get to The Acts of Paul and Thecla, we'll see that that interpretation of

Paul makes Paul anti-household. He actually is presented as going around preaching against marriage, against sex, against the Roman household, and preaching a very kind of hierarchical disrupting, even city-, polis-disrupting Gospel and certainly a household- and family-disrupting Apostle. These two trajectories of Pauline Christianity show the diversity of Christianity as it developed, and even how they used the same figure, Paul, as founder of Christianity in radically different ways.

- [4] When did these letters come about? It's everybody guess. I actually tend to think that the Pastoral Epistles were probably written sometime in the second century, and maybe even toward the middle of the second century. That's a bit later than a lot of scholars would put them, and we're just guessing anyway. We sort of have to imagine what kind of level of early Christianity, what kind of phase of early Christianity do we imagine taking place before we can get this kind of a letter with this kind of theology and church structure written. It is interesting that when we talked about Marcion early, remember the heretic in Rome who made his own first Canon list of New Testament books? Remember he included Luke as his Gospel in his own edited version of it and he included the letters of Paul. We don't have any evidence that Marcion actually knew about these three letters, I and II Timothy and Titus. If Marcion was writing in the middle of the second century, maybe Marcion, if he didn't mention them, maybe he didn't know them, and maybe that's evidence that they weren't yet highly circulated so that's one of the things that people have talked about, the dating of these letters. Since Marcion didn't seem to know them, perhaps they were either just being written or not long written around the middle of the second century.
- [5] First let me back up because I want to go through Paul really quickly and talk about what Paul's own view of the household is. Look with me in 1 Corinthians 7, we're going to review some things that we've gone on before but keep your Bibles in front of you. Look at 1 Corinthians 7:1:
- [6] Concerning the matters about which you wrote, "it is well for a man not to touch a woman." But because of cases of sexual immorality each man should have his own

wife and each woman her own husband; the husband should give his wife her conjugal rights, likewise the wife to her husband.

- [7] Notice how Paul balances these things. He tells basically the man, you have control of the body of your wife, but he also tells to the woman, you have control of the body of your husband. There's something of reciprocity in 1 Corinthians 7. This will be important because that kind of reciprocity doesn't exist when you get to the Pastoral Epistles. That's one thing to notice. Verse 5:
- [8] Do not deprive one another except perhaps by agreement for a set time to devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self control. This I say by way of concession, not of command. I wish that all were as I myself am but each has a particular gift from God, one having one kind and another a different kind.
- [9] Notice he's basically saying, have sex within marriage. He's not condemning sex, but he really prefers that all Christians be single like he himself is. Paul's preference is not marriage and sex within marriage. That's a concession that he gives for people that he says can't control themselves.
- [10] To the unmarried and widows, I say that it is well for them to remain unmarried as I am, but if they are not practicing self control they should marry. It is better to marry than to burn.
- [11] That's what the Greek actually says, "It is better to marry than to burn." That's been an interesting question of scholars, what does he mean by "burn"? Does he mean burn in hell? That it's better to marry than to be tempted to sin with sex outside of marriage and then you'd burn in hell? I've argued that what he means is "burn with desire" because it was very common in ancient Greek culture to portray any kind of erotic desire as actually a physical burning. They even portrayed it as a disease. When you start having that itchy feeling that we all know so well, that's because your body is actually heating up, and that's what causes that desire. The ancient Greek doctors, Greek and Roman doctors, gave all kinds of prescriptions to people to control that burning so they can control their erotic desire because they felt like it made you actually

unhealthy. Desire was unhealthy and sexual activity was dangerous. This was a concern throughout the ancient world and I think that's what Paul's talking about. What I've argued, and have argued this in my Corinthian body book and a few other places, is that Paul actually prefers that people avoid sex entirely, Christians avoid sex entirely. If they can't avoid sex entirely, and they're starting to have sexual desire burning in them and that gets dangerous, then they should get married and have sex but only to decrease the burning. What Paul wants is for them to experience sexual intercourse, even in marriage, without any erotic desire. Now that's kind of a radical idea but I believe that's actually what Paul was teaching here, is that he concedes it possible that Christians could have sex without experiencing desire, and that's his goal.

[12] Notice Paul doesn't have a very positive view of sex, even within marriage, it's a concession he allows people. Notice in none of this passage does he talk at all about having kids. Sexuality for Paul is not to make children in Paul's own letters. You have sex in marriage only to keep you from desiring. That's Paul's concern. That will change later. That's one place where—we also saw in I Thessalonians 4, if you'll remember, we had this same kind of thing. There, Paul is just talking to the men of the congregation and he says, don't you start wanting your brother's wife. He calls them *skeuos*, your vessel, he says, "Each of you should have your vessel." And the debate is whether he's talking about their genitalia, which is one possible interpretation of the Greek, or their wife's body, which is another possible interpretation of the Greek. For Paul, in I Thessalonians 4, he's telling men also, control yourself—and he says, "Not in passion of desire like the Gentiles," so there again, in I Thessalonians, 4, Paul is really concerned that the Thessalonian disciples are not lusting after their fellow Christian's wife. Keep your own vessel, and that's how you control yourself. And notice again he's excluding the idea of passion and desire. It just does not have a part in it. I admit that this is kind of a radical argument, and there are a lot of people out there who haven't bought my argument, but that seems to me to be precisely what the text is saying. Paul never allows for a good notion of sexual pleasure or sexual desire. He seems to want to exclude it in order to keep you from

experiencing desire and he believes that he can do that even by having sex. In those ways we see Paul is not anti-marriage exactly, but he's certainly not pro-marriage, and he's not anti-sex exactly, but he's certainly is not pro-sex. The one thing he does seem to be anti is desire, sexual desire.

[13] All right, where do women fit in all this? I pointed out that in I Thessalonians 4 Paul doesn't seem to think about women at all there. In fact, I even proposed when I lectured on I Thessalonians that by the time Paul wrote that letter, which is one of his earliest letters, maybe the earliest letter we have in the Canon, Paul may have been conceiving of the Christian group as being sort of a male club because that's the way he tends to be talking to them. A male club of mainly working class manual laborers. That's changed by the time we get to I Corinthians, right? Because Paul directly talks about women a lot, he sees women as being in something like a co-relationship with their husbands and sexual activity in I Corinthians 7. He addresses women as leaders of churches at times. So by the time Paul writes I Corinthians, women are acknowledged as an important part of his churches.

[14] But in 1 Corinthians 11, look there, he doesn't have women on a completely equal stance with men apparently. In I Corinthians 11 he says:

[15] I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions just as I handed them onto you. But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man and the husband is ahead of the wife as God is ahead of the church.

[16] There is a clear hierarchy there, and Paul goes on to talk about what this is going to have to do with women veiling their heads when they pray and prophesy, which another very complicated and controversial passage in Paul. It's clear that Paul views, just as he views God as the head of Christ, that is Christ of being somewhat inferior person compared to God the Father, so women are in an inferior position with regard to their husbands. The Greek words here, they're just the words for "man" and "woman." But since the Greek doesn't have special terms for "husband" and "wife," when you see a Greek term like this in this context, you have to make the decision: are

you going to translate this as “man” or “woman,” and make this a generic kind of idea that women in general are supposed to be subordinated to men in general, or do you take the terms and translate them into “husband” and “wife.” Both translations are fine, as far as the Greek goes, and then you’re taking that sort of inferiority subordination complex to be something that’s talking about with husbands and wives.

Galatians 3:28 an egalitarian statement by Paul? Some people say yes. Is it not an egalitarian statement by Paul? I say it’s not. That’s a complicated argument also. If Galatians 3:28 is an egalitarian statement, how does that fit then with this 1 Corinthians 14 passage where Paul seems to be saying women should be silent in church and be subordinate, ask your husband at home.

[17] Look at I Corinthians 14:33:

[18] As in all the churches of the saints, women should be silent in the churches for they are not permitted to speak but should be subordinate as the law also says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a women to speak in church, or did the word of God originate with you, or are you the only ones it has reached?

[19] That’s odd, he seems to telling the women not to speak in church at all, although previously he had given instructions for how they could pray and prophesy in church as long as they are wearing a veil. What is going on here? Also, doesn’t this have something—have something of a conflict with Galatians 3:28 which is a famous verse in which Paul says, “In Christ there is no Jew nor Greek, there’s no free or slave, there’s no male and female.” Now that verse has been interpreted, especially since the 1970s, as teaching that Paul taught the equality of men and women in Christ; if in Christ there’s no male and female doesn’t that mean they’re equal? Yes sir.

[20] *Student:* What letter is that?

[21] *Professor Dale Martin:* Galatians 3:28. This has been an argument, this is why I’m talking about the stuff—those of you who are writing papers this week need to talk about, but notice this is complex. You’ve got Galatians 3:28 that looks like an egalitarian statement, except a very famous biblical scholar wrote an article arguing that Galatians 3:28 is not an egalitarian statement because Paul was talking about in the resurrection human beings—Christians will be androgynes, that they’ll be male/female combinations, and in that male/female combination the masculinity is still superior to femininity even in the androgyne body of the resurrection. Is

[22] Did any of you notice that those verses I just read in 1 Corinthians 14 are in some translations in brackets, in parentheses? How many people have a translation of 1 Corinthians 14:34-36 that’s in either brackets or parentheses? Raise your hand. How many people have a translation where they’re not in brackets or parentheses, anybody? Okay, so some of you don’t have them in brackets. That’s showing you that these editors are not sure whether that was actually part of the original letter. There’s a dispute here. If you looked at your footnotes of your Bible, your footnotes might even say, “some ancient authorities” don’t include this or include these verses in a different place. This is the issue, and we do have some Greek texts, some Greek manuscripts that either don’t have these verses or have them in a different place in the text. Well how would that happen?

[23] Well, the idea goes that some scribe, at some point, was copying over I Corinthians 14 and got to the point where this is in the text and wrote out in the margin, well wait a minute this is not right because of course the scribes are living at a later time when women definitely were in a more inferior position in churches. They couldn’t be priests, they couldn’t be bishops and this sort of thing, and that scribe writes in, well no, of course, women can’t do that, so there’s a little note that occurs there on the margins of the text. Other scribes come along and find this manuscript and they decide, well that shouldn’t be out here in the margin; that should go into the text someplace. So one scribe copying it over puts that excerpt in this part of the text and another one puts it in this part of the text in different places. And then those manuscripts are copied over by other scribes. And you end up with Greek manuscripts with these verses in different places in I Corinthians 14. Some scholars have said that all looks like those verses that teach the subordination of women in I Corinthians 14 were not originally by Paul but were a later

scribal interpolation, insertion into the text. Other scholars disagree with that, and they think that these verses were original with I Corinthians 14.

[24] In other words, I've given you a lot of problems to deal with. If you're going to talk about what was Paul's view of women you've got to figure out, well, what do you think Galatians 3:28 really teaches. Is it an egalitarian statement or not? Is I Corinthians 14—these verses—is that part of Paul's original teaching or not? Then you've got the situation where in Romans 16, several verses in Romans 16, Paul actually addresses women as leaders of churches. There are places where Paul is willing to talk to women as leaders of churches. In fact, one of the verses in I Corinthians 16, Paul addresses two people, Andronicus and Junia, and he says, "These are esteemed among the Apostles." "Among the Apostles," that sounds like he's actually saying that Andronicus and Junia are themselves Apostles. And Paul thinks himself—the Apostles, in Paul's view, doesn't include just the twelve, right? Because he thinks he's an Apostle and he's not one of the twelve. The word "Apostle" for Paul is wider than the twelve, and it refers to people who go out and spread the Gospel. Apparently, Paul is calling two people, Andronicus and Junia, "Apostles" in Romans 16. Interestingly enough, that word "Junia," that might be in your translation as "Junia" nowadays, but in older English versions, it was translated as "Junias," which would be a man's name. In Latin, if you add an "s" on that word it looks like a man's name, if you don't have the "s," it looks like a woman's name. There was debate among scholars about how to translate it. It looks the same basically in Greek because of the way the word occurs in the sentence.

[25] When you translated it, are you going to make it a man's name or a woman's name? People had always made it a man's name. Why? Because scholars just thought—of course all these scholars are men themselves throughout hundreds of years of tradition—they thought, well you can't have a woman Apostle, so it must be a man's name. In the seventies some feminist biblical scholars came along and pointed out that "Junias" is a very, very, very rare man's name but "Junia" is a very common woman's name, and argued again through textual criticism that Paul originally was

addressing a woman, Junia. And now you have basically most scholars admitting that this is a woman. It's a woman's name. Paul was addressing a man, Andronicus, and a woman, Junia, and calling them both Apostles. There's some evidence that Paul actually doesn't have such a negative view of women if he's going to allow them to have leadership roles in his churches.

[26] So you've got Paul in rather confusing situations. Is Paul a feminist? Is he for egalitarian theology with men and women? How does this relate to these different issues that come up in his letters? Those are Paul's basic views of both marriage and the family, and sex, and the roles of women. Often in early Christianity, in the history of Christianity, these two things go together. What a text is going to teach about the role of women in the church and in the world often has something to do with what it teaches about the family. Most of the time when a text is really, really pro-family, they teach the subordination of women more directly. When they're anti-family, they often tend to allow women bigger roles in their congregations. So it's kind of a pairing that goes along, and that's exactly what we'll see this week when we see the Pastoral Epistles that take Paul down the pro-family anti-woman route, and The Acts of Paul and Thecla, which takes Paul down the anti-family pro-woman route.

2. *The Pro-family and Anti-ascetic Stance in the Pastoral Epistles*

[27] Let's look at the Pastorals, first. What is this author in I Timothy attacking? I'm going to spend most of my time in I Timothy because that's where I can get these examples. A lot of this stuff occurs in the letter to Titus also because the letter to Titus repeats a lot of the stuff that's in the first letter of Timothy. In I Timothy 1:3,

[28] I urge you, as I did when I was on my way to Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus so that you may instruct certain people not to teach any different doctrine, not to occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies that promote speculations rather than the divine training that is known by faith.

[29] This and vain discussions and genealogies—in I Timothy 4:7 he talks about godless and silly

myths. Titus 1:10 and 14 also—and he also in Titus says that he’s against people who are teaching circumcision and Jewish myths, he calls them. What are these myths? Well, we’re not really sure. Are these sort of Gnostic-type myths about many different gods doing things and having to placate those gods in order to reach the highest God as we’ve seen in some Gnostic texts that we talked about earlier in the semester? We don’t know, but there’s some kind of stories about either angels or gods that some people are teaching, and this author is writing against it. Some aspect—something’s Jewish about this he doesn’t like.

called knowledge.” What is the Greek word for knowledge? Pardon?

[30] Look at I Timothy 4:1:

[31] Now the spirit expressly says that in later times [in the latter days] some will renounce the faith by paying attention to deceitful spirits and the teachings of demons, through the hypocrisy of liars whose consciences are seared with a hot iron. They forbid marriage and demand abstinence from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.”

[32] This author is against people who are challenging marriage. He’s against people who are promoting some kind of ascetic behavior with regard to food, so avoiding certain kinds of foods: is this kashrut? Maybe he’s talking about people who are teaching people not to eat pork, not to eat shellfish. Are they teaching Jewish food laws? He’s not explicit. He’s against people who are teaching that, he’s against people who are forbidding marriage and teaching any kind of dietary restrictions.

[33] Look at I Timothy 5:23. This is when he tells Timothy, “No longer drink only water but take a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.” Why does he have to tell somebody to drink some wine and not just drink water? Well, because there were ascetics who taught to avoid wine in the ancient world. That was one of those things that very strict ascetics might decide to avoid was wine and rich food. This author says to Timothy, nope, you should drink wine. This was our favorite verse when I grew up in a church that didn’t allow drinking, of course. I always like to throw this one back at the elders of the church. Look at I Timothy 6:20, “Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you. Avoid the profane chatter and contradictions of what is falsely

[34] *Student:* Gnosis.

[35] *Professor Dale Martin:* Gnosis, exactly. See, you’re getting more than you paid for in this course. You didn’t know you were going to learn Greek, and you’re getting some good cocktail party information, and even some Greek language. Gnosis is the word for knowledge here, and this guy is attacking people who are going around boasting about falsely called knowledge. Again, that’s led some scholars to say is he talking about some kind of Gnosticism? Is that what he’s opposing? That would go along with this idea that they’re using this word gnosis in ways he doesn’t like. They’re teaching myths, they’re teaching asceticism, they’re teaching the avoidance of marriage, well that does look a bit like other early Christian, second century Christian groups, some of whom their opponents would call Gnostics, but we don’t have enough information for it to be easy to tell.

[36] Now look at one more text, this is II Timothy 2:18, he’s actually giving some names of people he doesn’t like. In 2:18 it says, “These people have swerved from the truth by claiming that the resurrection has already taken place.” He’s condemning that. Remember how I even talked about with Colossians and Ephesians last time, you had this idea that they almost sound like the resurrection has already taken place. In your baptism with Christ you have been raised with Christ, and maybe there are other people wandering around the second century, Christians, saying that you’ve already been raised from the dead, you’ve already experienced the resurrection. This author really condemns that. He wants to say, no, the resurrection hasn’t taken place yet, so he’s condemning false teachers for all kinds of different activities and teachings that he doesn’t like. So we’re seeing a definite split here between different kinds of Paulinism. There’s a Paulinism represented by these texts which is pro-family, pro-marriage, pro-procreation. We’ll talk about later that he’s for having children and mentions this explicitly; anti-asceticism, against forcing people to control what they eat and these sorts of things

and this idea about maybe Jewish myths being something and the teaching of the resurrection.

3. *The Pastoral Epistles and the Jewish Law*

[37] I Timothy 1:9, then, gets us into another issue: what is the law and what is this author's take on it? I Timothy 1:9, 8: "Now we know that the law is good if one uses it legitimately." That of course can be a quotation right out of Romans because Romans itself has Paul says the law is good.

[38] This means understanding that the law is laid down not for the innocent but for the lawless and disobedient, for the godless and sinful, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their father or mother, or murderers, fornicators, sodomite, slave traders, liars, perjurers, whatever else is contrary to sound teaching that contradicts the gracious, the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.

[39] Notice this guy doesn't have really a problem with the law that we've seen sometimes in Paul's writings. The law is basically just a set of rules designed to keep people who can't control themselves in line. In fact, he goes on to say that if you're a good person you don't even need to worry about the law. Now this is again different from what Paul's view is. Paul did not want his Gentile followers to keep the Jewish law, and Paul said in Romans that the law is good. For Paul the law is still this cosmic entity almost that invaded history. This is very much Galatians, remember when I gave the lecture on Galatians and Romans I talked about how the Jewish law for Paul is not simply a list of rules. It was this thing that came into the cosmos as an invader, it enslaved humanity, it was the pedagogue that swatted humanity down when humanity was in its childish state. Obeying the law for Paul is equal to trying to worship the stoichea of the cosmos, these elemental spirits of the universe. So the law for Paul isn't simply a list of rules. The law for Paul is a very ambiguous cosmic entity. It's just mythological in a sense for Paul.

[40] For this author that's not what the law is. The law—you don't need to obey it, he says, and he's against teaching his Gentile converts to keep the Jewish law, but he just says, it's not important. It's only for people who are sinners

who can't control themselves. As long as you're not a sinner, as long as you don't do this list of things that I can give you, you don't need to concern yourself about the law. So this is another one of the reasons that people like me say, this is not Paul writing. People who believe Paul wrote these letters would say, well they're written years later, it's to a different context, and Paul changed his mind, or Paul's nuancing his message differently for a different context. So there are scholars who would defend these letters being by Paul and that's what they would say. I look at it and I say that's so not like Paul. It's a totally different view of the law and its role in the cosmos than you see in Romans or Galatians, which is another piece of evidence for me that Paul is not the author of this letter.

4. *The Church as Household*

[41] The strategy, then, of this author, he's trying to argue against all kinds of myths and practices that somebody's going through Paul's churches and teaching. So he writes a letter in Paul's name, seemingly addressed to Paul's follower Timothy, and he lays out what he doesn't like about that. But that's not all of his strategy. What is his strategy for combating these things that he considers false teachings? First, he makes the church itself a household. Now this is where all that lecturing in the first part of the semester, when I talked over and over again, what is the patriarchal household, what is the Roman household, what is the paterfamilias, what is the structure of the household, what is the patron client relationship, what is the role of wives and women in the household, and children, and slaves? All of that was because when you get to some of these aspects of early Christianity, this author is using the Roman household as the model for the church itself. That wasn't the way Paul did it, right? Paul never talked about the church as if it just had the same structure of a household. He didn't talk about men always being on top of the leadership organization, and he didn't promote marriage very much, which is what this author does. I Timothy 3:14:

[42] I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these instructions to you so that if I am delayed you may know how one ought to behave in the

household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth.

[43] The church is the household of God. The same thing happens in I Timothy 5, the beginning of I Timothy 5:

[44] Do not speak harshly to an older man; speak to him as a father, to younger men as brothers, to older women as mothers, to younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.

[45] Notice everybody in the church has some familial role. Older guys are fathers, your younger men in the church are your brothers, younger women sisters, older women mothers, everybody has a household role in the church. This is different—we might think this is automatic but, notice, this is not treating the church as an ecclesia, that Greek word that we translate “church.” Where did the term ecclesia come from? Do you remember? In Greek, what does the term ecclesia originally refer to in classical Greek?

[46] *Student:* Assembly.

[47] *Professor Dale Martin:* The assembly of the city. It’s the assembly of the city-state that came together for political purposes and to vote. It comes out of the Greek democracy, with its notions of some kind of equality among citizens and all the—at least the men citizens getting a vote. It’s important that early Christians, for some reason, chose this word ecclesia to describe their house churches. It was ridiculous. An outsider would have—might have thought this is kind of ridiculous; you’re using the term that people would have heard as the town assembly for a few people who can fit into one dining room? It’s kind of acceding more importance to yourself than you really should. I think it’s important that early Christian groups use that term for themselves. Why didn’t early Christian groups call themselves “synagogues”? That was a term already in use by Jews; it would have been a normal term to use. We don’t find many early Christians using the term “synagogue” for their groups. We do find them using ecclesia very quickly, but an ecclesia isn’t a household. What this author is doing is shifting, in a not so subtle way, understanding these house groups as being more like town assemblies, and making them look more like Roman household.

[48] Also, then, men have certain roles. I Timothy 2:8: “I desire that in every place the men should pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or argument, also that the women should pray lifting up holy hands without argument.” No, Dale’s lying to you again.

[49] The women should dress themselves modestly, decently, and in suitable clothing, not with their hair braided [girls, are you listening?] or with gold, pearls, or expensive clothes, but with good works as is proper for women who profess reverence for God. Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. I permit no woman to teach or have authority over a man. She is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve, and Adam was not deceived but the woman was deceived, and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing, provided they continue in faith and love and holiness with modesty.

[50] Now this is something that my mom used to hate it when they would preach about this in church. Also, it’s controversial; does it mean that she’s saved from the dangers of childbirth? That’s one way of reading it. She’ll be saved from the dangers of childbirth if she lives a pious and holy life. Or, a bit more of a radical way of reading, it would be to say, by having babies women help constitute their own salvation—that having children is one of the ways that women save themselves. Either way you look at it, this author really wants women to be in a subordinate role, silent in church. They can’t have any leadership authority or teaching authority over a man. As we’ll see, they do have some offices. There are roles that women can play in the Pastoral Epistles, but not in authority over men. Then there’s this odd thing about childbearing. And I think what it means is that childbearing actually can help save women from their sins in some way. Women have to be modestly dressed, no jewelry, saved through childbearing. In order to maintain this kind of household structure, a very hierarchical household structure, this author sets up offices in the church. And here’s another reason to call these “the Pastoral Epistles,” because he’s setting up pastoral offices. Look in I Timothy 3:1-7, “The saying is sure whoever is aspires to the office of bishop desires a noble task.” Now a bishop—does anybody have a different translation for what I just read as “bishop”?

- [51] *Student*: “Overseer.”
- [52] *Professor Dale Martin*: “Overseer,” yes, “overseer” is a translation. Anybody have a different translation? The word “bishop” here is—the Greek word is episkopos, where we get the English word “bishop” and you get the name for the Episcopal church because it’s a church that has bishops. In Greek it basically means “an overseer” or “someone in charge.”
- [53] The bishop must be above reproach, married only once, temperate, sensible, respectable, hospitable, an apt teacher, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way. For if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how can he take care of God’s church?
- [54] Again the church is a household. If you’re going to be the bishop over the church you have to be married, because how can you manage the household of the church if you can’t prove it by managing your own household well? “He must not be a recent convert...” The bishop or the episkopos is already himself now a male head of household. The other office he talks about in 5:17, “Let the elders,” now just as the word we translated “bishop” or “overseer,” comes from the Greek word episkopos, the Greek for elder here is presbyteros, presbyter, and this is where the Presbyterian church gets the name of its church. They’re Presbyterians because the Presbyterian church rejected the use of bishops like they found in Catholic and Anglican churches, and chose a plurality of elders, so they’re called “elders” in the Presbyterian church, and the Presbyterian church comes from this Greek word meaning “elder,” presbyteros and this is actually—this came to be later in English the name for a bishop who was not just the head of one particular church but became the head of a series of churches, a bunch of churches, that is the bishop now is not the head of one church but the head of a whole diocese, that is a geographical grouping. The word’s changed a bit but that’s—bishop comes from this word and presbyteros turned into the word priest, so one of the suggested etymology’s for where the English word “priest” came from is from this Greek word itself, and you can kind of say presbyteros, priest. It just kind of happens in English over a few hundred years.
- [55] Elders also have to have wives, be family men, and all this sort of thing. There are other offices to look at—real quickly we’re going to go through this. Deacons: 3:8:
- [56] Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not indulging in much wine, not greedy for money. They must hold fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. Let them first be tested, then, if they prove themselves blameless, let them serve as deacons. Women likewise must be serious.
- [57] Now there’s an exegetical problem, does this “women” refer to women who would themselves independently be deacons? In other words, is he allowing women to be deacons on their own, or is it supposed to be taken to be just the wives of the male deacons? That they’re called deacons also, or deaconesses; the word for “deacon” here comes from the Greek diakonos, it comes into English directly, and that word just means “a servant,” “someone who serves or ministers.” The women in 3:11—some exegetes would say this shows that this author does allow at least women to be deacons, deaconesses, and they have certain kinds of roles. Verse 12: “Let deacons be married only once, let them manage their children and their households well, for those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves.”
- [58] Notice, in the beginning, all of these roles, whether it’s the elder, presbyter, or the bishop—and there’s some debate about whether “presbyter” refers to the same role as a bishop in these letters—they seem to be combined in some of the later pastoral letters, or whether they refer to two separate offices, so there’s a bit of a debate. All of these people, whether you’re from bishops, presbyters, deacons, they all are required to be married and all are required to have children. In the beginning of early Christianity, see, you did not have the celibate ministry. The celibate ministry comes about later. This is in line with this author’s intention to set up the church as a household structure with men on top, women having their own roles.

- [59] Now there are other roles here too, look at I Timothy 5:3-10, “Honor widows,” this is I Timothy 5:3:
- [60] Honor widows who are really widows. If a widow has children or grandchildren they should first learn their religious duty to their own family and make some repayment to their parents, for this is pleasing in God’s sight. The real widow, left alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers, night and day. But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. Give these commands as well so that they may be above reproach. Whoever does not provide for relatives, and especially for family members, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” [Now it gets really interesting.] Let a widow be put on the list, let her be registered.
- [61] It seems like he’s actually creating another kind of office in the church, that is, the office of widows. And, sure enough, in Christianity later, “widow” became almost like an office in early Christianity. They could be registered, and they received financial help from the churches. “Let a widow be put on the list if she is not less than sixty years old and has been married only once.” Notice over and over here, we’ve seen this thing about being married once. Apparently this author believes in marriage and wants people to be married, but his ideal is that people should be married once. You certainly should not be divorced and remarried. Paul himself forbids people in his church from being divorced and remarried, as we saw in I Corinthians 11. But this author seems to say that if you’re married and your spouse dies, he still kind of prefers that these women be married once.
- [62] He also said that the bishop or the presbyteros should be men who are married only once, so multiple marriages are really frowned on even though marriage itself is highly valued. This led to what is currently the practice in many of the eastern churches. Eastern Orthodox, the Greek Orthodox, the Russian Orthodox, they do not forbid their priests from being married, but you have to be married before you become a priest. So you’ll have a lot of young men in Greece or Russia who are going to become priests, and they want to quickly get married right out of seminary. So they’re looking around for a partner, because if they become ordained as a priest and they’re not married, they’re expected to stay unmarried. If their wife dies after they become a priest, they’re expected to stay celibate and single for the rest of their lives also. This led to the tradition in Eastern Christianity, that you can be a married priest, unlike the Roman Catholic Church, but only if you get married before you become a priest. And it kept this idea of being married once only.
- [63] I can’t go into the rest of this but notice how this whole hierarchy of man and woman in a household, old and young, is also extended to children and slaves. Already in Colossians and Ephesians we had what we called the household codes: masters treat your slaves well; slaves be obedient to your masters; husbands treat your wives well; wives submit to your husbands; children submit to your fathers; fathers treat your children—these are called household codes. Already in Colossians and Ephesians they set up the household in a clear hierarchical patriarchal situation. That is intensified in the Pastoral Epistles. You have much longer household codes, and, whereas in Colossians and Ephesians that—those writers at least said there was some reciprocity. They would address the slaves, you would have to obey the master but they would also address the master and say, treat your slaves well. When you get to the Pastoral Epistles they left out the reciprocity, it’s mainly directed to the slaves, to the children, to the wives, saying, submit.
- [64] This is the strategy that this writer uses to combat the forms of Christianity that he doesn’t like, to construct the church as a rigid patriarchal household in which each person has a role. Even young women, he says they’re not supposed to be enrolled as widows, if you have young women who are widows, and they start running around gossiping and getting in a lot of trouble, he says get them married off again. Old women, of course, you couldn’t marry off again, they’re not enough old men around in the ancient world to marry them off, so he creates this structure by which women, older women, get pulled back into the household by this role as widows. No matter what happens to a woman, in this author’s view, they have to be put back into their submissive place in the household structure, even if that means creating a new role for them called “widows.” This strategy this author uses

to bring Paul into his own time. He's taking a Paul that we've seen as a bit different from this and he's reinventing Paul for a second century Christian environment and restructuring the church as a household. We'll see an author on

Wednesday doing precisely the opposite with Paul. See you next time.

[end of transcript]