

Fight the Good Fight
1 Timothy 3:8-13 (Week 10) 11/09/2025
The Portrait of a Deacon

This is my message written prior to being preached. Please excuse the bullet point format and any grammatical mistakes. This is meant to be spoken.

⁸ Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. ⁹ They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰ And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. ¹¹ Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. ¹² Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. ¹³ For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus. (1 Timothy 3:8-13)

Introduction and Review

- So today we **continue** our study through Paul's first letter to **Timothy**.
- And as I've mentioned in **previous studies**,
- Paul states **his purpose** for writing this letter in **Chapter 3 verse 15...**

¹⁵ if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God... (1 Timothy 3:15)

- Paul wants to help Timothy, who he assigned to lead the church in **Ephesus**.
- And so, he instructs him on how believers **ought to behave in the church**.
- And in **chapter 3** his focus is on how **church leaders** ought to behave.
- What their lives should look like to people inside and outside the church.
- In **verses 1-7, which we looked at last week**,
- Paul describes how an **overseer, an elder in the church** should behave.
- He then follows that with a description (a portrait if you will) of **how a deacon should behave**.
- He is saying **Timothy** when you look for **Deacons** in the household of God!
- **This is what they should look like**.
- **So, the first thing I want us to do is answer the question...**

What is a Deacon?

- The word **deacon** is not a **translation of a Greek word** but rather a **transliteration**.
- What that means is that the **English word Deacon** comes **directly** from the Greek word, **di-a-kon-os**.
- **It's not translated, instead it's written in the Latin (English) alphabet**.
- **And then pronounced based on English phonetics. How we would say it.**
- Other examples of transliteration in the Bible would be Angel, Apostle, Baptize, Hosanna & Christ.
- These words, along with others, including **deacon** are simply the **English variations** of Greek and Hebrew words.

- So, the **question is**, what does the Greek word **di-a-ko-nos** mean?
- Well, it simply means **servant, attendant or even waiter**.
- In fact, the first “**deacons**” in Jerusalem were appointed to **serve meals**.
- In **Acts chapter 6** we read...

¹ Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists (Greek Speaking Jews) arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. ² And the twelve (the apostles) summoned the full number of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. ³ Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. ⁴ But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” (Acts 6:1-4)

- The word the **apostles** used for “**serving tables**” is the Greek word for **deaconing (di-a-ko-nin)**.
- Now I don’t think that **when** the apostles instructed “**the full number of disciples**” to select brothers to **serve tables** that they were officially **instituting the office of Deacon**.
- But it wasn’t long before **the early church** developed **two official offices**.
- In fact, we find only two offices in the New Testament.
- That of **elder/bishop/overseer** (those who under Christ, lead the church)
- and **deacon**, those who **serve Christ and His Church**.
- Now we find these offices in **1 Timothy 3** and in Paul’s greeting to **the church in Philippi...**

¹ Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons: (Philippians 1:1)

- It seems that in Philippi, among the saints,
- the church had designated two specific groups of people, or church offices,
- **elders/overseers and deacons**.
- Now based on the meaning of the **Greek words (overseers)** those who oversee.
- And **deacons** those **who serve**.
- Along with the **passage in Acts** where the first deacons (**table servers**) were selected.
- It becomes clear that the **church developed a practical division of labor** between **elders and deacons**.
- Like the apostles, **elders devote themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word**.
- They labor in **the spiritual work of intercession and proclamation of the gospel**.
- While **deacons serve**.
- They take care of **people’s material needs in a spiritual way**.
- **One book on church government says...**

The office of deacon is not one of rule, but rather of service both to the physical and spiritual needs of the people.

- So, **deacons** mainly serve God’s people in **tangible ways**.

- And we see this in the fact that in our English Bibles,
- the word Deacon is not often substituted for the Greek (**di-a-ko-nos**).
- But instead, it's normally translated to the English words "**servant**" and sometimes **minister**.
- In most English translations, **deacon** is only found here in **1 Timothy** and in **Philippines 1:1**.
- So, to get a better feel for what it means to be a **deacon**,
- Let's look at few of the many examples where **di-a-ko-nos** is translated as some form of **serve or minister**.
- In **John chapter 12:2** we read...

² So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served [deaconed], and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. (John 12:2)

- **Di-a-ko-nos** is often used to simply describe the act of serving (food) or serving in other ways.
- And Jesus famously used this word to convey the importance of **radical self-sacrificing service**.
- Of which **he is the prime example....**
- In **Mark's gospel**, Jesus says...

⁴³ ...But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, [deacon] ⁴⁴ and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man came not to be served [deaconed] but to serve, [to deacon] and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Mark 10:43-45)

- Jesus came to **serve**, to serve **our greatest need in the most radical and practical way possible**, By giving his life as a ransom (a payment) for many.
- Then later, in the **upper room in Jerusalem**,
- on the night Jesus served his disciples by **washing their feet**, he said,

²⁷ For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves [deacons]? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves [deacons]. (Luke 22:27)

- Therefore, it should come as no surprise that the word **di-a-ko-nos** (deacon) came to represent all kinds of service **and be attributed to all kinds of people who serve**.
- In fact, speaking of **the Apostles (leaders) themselves**,
- Paul **rhetorically** asks the Corinthians...

²³ Are they servants [deacons] of Christ?... (2 Corinthians 11:23)

- And throughout his letters Paul again and again refers to himself, not an elder, or overseer but as a servant a "**deacon**"
- For example, in **Colossians** he writes...

²⁵ ...I became a minister [deacon] according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, (Colossians 1:25)

- And there are others....
- Here in **1 Timothy**, Paul **says to Timothy** who is the leader of the church in Ephesus....

6 ...you will be a good servant [deacon] of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed. (1 Timothy 4:6)

- And to the church in **Ephesus**, Paul writes of...

21 ...Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister [deacon] in the Lord will tell you everything. (Ephesians 6:21)

- And to the **Colossians** he writes of...

7 ...Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister [deacon] of Christ on your behalf (Colossians 1:7)

- **And finally**, in his final greetings to the church of **Rome** Paul writes...

1 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant [deacon] of the church at Cenchree, (Romans 16:1)

- Here the NIV uses the word deacon to describe Phoebe.
- So **certainly, women** are also included in those **who serve the church**.
- And we will talk later about whether **they should hold the official position of Deacon**.
- Or **Deaconess** if you will.
- But my point here is that the **Apostles, Paul, Timothy and others** are called **deacons, servants, minsters**.
- Now this is not to say that the early church didn't also have an official office of deacon,
- **just like they had the office of elder**.
- I believe they did.
- However, whether a person is appointed by the church as **an official deacon or not**,
- **All believers are to be servants**, ministers, Deacons of Christ and His Church!
- **Including and especially the leaders, like Jesus we are to be servant leaders**.
- Now at **Bridges**.
- We don't have the **official position of Deacon**.
- **However**, we do have many people **who [deacon] who serve Christ and his church**.
- And I believe one of the reasons we don't have the position of **deacons** is reflected in a **difference between most modern churches and the early church**
- That is, **Churches** today, for practical economic reasons, **often hire people to serve the church**.
- This is true at Bridges...
- **Currently Victoria Ng** serves as our **worship leader**.
- **Julia Murray** serves by taking care of **our finances** and other miscellaneous duties.

- **Brian Drummond** serves as our **associate pastor**,
- Along with his Pastoral duties, Brian has the responsibility of serving us all by managing the office
- and many other practical aspects of church life.
- And finally, **there's me**, I serve as the **Senior pastor** and **an elder**.
- But I also serve the church in other **practical ways**.
- **So, we have the staff who in a sense serve as Deacons.**
- **And we have elders.**
- And yes, **the elders oversee the church and minister the word.**
- But they/we are **servant leaders**, serving the church in many practical ways.
- **Just ask Don about fixing toilets and hanging lights.**
- **So, our staff and elders, serve the church, and in that way, they are deacons.**
- **Plus**, we have **many members** who **voluntarily** serve the church in very practical and tangible ways.
- From teaching the kids, to making the coffee.
- From running the tech upstairs to handing out bulletins.
- From blowing the leaves to posting on social media.
- From setting up chairs to serving food.
- And more...
- My point is, even though Bridges doesn't have the **official position of Deacon**.
- We have many people who **deacon (who serve)** Christ and His church.
- And so, as we look at our passage for today,
- As we see **The Portrait of a Deacon**, it's really the **Portrait of a Servant**.
- And it certainly applies to each and **every member of this church!**
- So, let's turn to **our passage and see...**

A Deacon's Qualifications

- And the first area Paul speaks to is...

1. A Deacon's Dignity

- **Unlike the elder**, the deacon does not have the responsibility to oversee and teach God's people.
- However, he does **have some similar qualifications to an elder**.
- Having just given the **elder's qualifications...**
- In **verse 8** Paul writes...

⁸ Deacons likewise

- Like the elders deacons...

must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. (1 Timothy 3:8)

- You see **some similarities** here to **the qualification for elder**.
- Elders are not to be **drunkards** and **deacons** are not to be **addicted to much wine**.
- Elders are not to be **lovers of money** and **deacons** are not to be **greedy for dishonest gain**.
- Elders are to be **respectable** and **deacons** are to be **dignified** (honorable, respectable).
- And that word **dignified** really summarizes what **we find here in verse 8**.

- **First**, a deacon must not be

double-tongued (literally, "not a double-talker").

- A deacon does not say one thing to one person and a different thing to the next.
- **He's not one to gossip.**
- If you need someone to confide in, **he can be trusted**.
- He's dignified, honest, and credible, because he speaks the truth.

- And his **dignity** also shows up in his **temperance**,

He's not addicted to much wine.

- He doesn't turn to the **bottle to relieve himself** from the problems in this life.
- Instead, he turns to the Lord.
- **Also**, he's

not greedy for dishonest gain

- He's dignified, **an honest man**.
- Like the **qualified elder** he **loves people not money**.
- And he goes out of his way **to be fair in all his business dealings**.

- So first **a Deacon is dignified**.
- He says what he means and he means what he says.
- He's **not drunk on wine or money**.
- Paul then **turns to....**

2. A Deacon's Belief

- Even though deacons are not required to be "**able to teach**" as are elders,

⁹ They must hold the mystery of the faith... (1 Timothy 3:9)

- **More precisely**, they must **hold to the mystery of the faith**.
- **And what does that mean?**
- **Well, mystery** is a term commonly used by Paul to describe something that was **once hidden**
- but is now revealed to those **who have spiritual discernment**.

- And **the mystery of the faith** is the **mystery of the gospel**, the good news of Jesus Christ.
- Paul **asks the Ephesians** to pray for him **that he would boldly...**

¹⁹ ...proclaim the mystery of the gospel, (Ephesians 6:19)

- The Old Testament mystery was, **how can God forgive sins?**
- And **this mystery** was **revealed by Jesus'** and his death on the cross.
- As the **Father's sinless Son**, he suffered the wrath we deserved, making forgiveness possible.
- As **John tells us in his first Letter...**

¹ My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. ² He is the propitiation (he atoned) for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2:1-2)

- The Old Testament mystery of how our sins are forgiven, **of how we are saved from our sins,**
- **was revealed by Jesus Christ.**
- It is the **mystery of the faith**; it is **the mystery of the gospel.**
- By placing our faith **in Jesus Christ**, and his sacrificial death on the cross for our sins.
- We receive forgiveness, **we are saved from our sins and saved to a relationship with God through Christ.**
- And it's this **mystery** that deacons must **understand and hold on to:**
- Put simply, **deacons put their faith in, believe, trust in the gospel of Jesus Christ.**
- **And we say of course they must.**
- But there's more - **a deacon must hold on to the mystery of the faith...**

with a clear conscience.

- Now what does that mean?
- Well, it means that what a deacon believes **he must also live by, "with a clear conscience."**
- **Or we could say...**
- A man's faith is in **good shape** when his **conscience does not condemn the way he lives.**
- And the opposite is true as well...
- **As Paul told Timothy to...**

¹⁸ ... wage the good warfare (fight the good fight), ¹⁹ holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith, (1 Timothy 1:18-19)

- If a person **rejects their faith** and/or their **good conscience.**
- If they no longer **live by what they once believed to be right and true.**
- Then **their faith** can be **shipwrecked.**
- And this is not something Paul wants to **happen to Deacons in the church.**
- So, he **says a deacon must hold fast** to his faith in **Jesus Christ** with a clear conscience.

- Because this means His faith (his belief) has penetrated his soul and is impacting his life.
- He **Truly Believes**, which results in his **belief being seen in the way he lives**.
- And the **way he serves Christ and His Church**.
- The point is, when you look at his life, his service to Christ and the church, you know he truly believes!
- So, we've seen a **Deacon's Dignity and Belief...**
- Then Paul turns to...

3. A Deacon's Testing

- **Verse 10...**

¹⁰ And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. (1 Timothy 3:10)

- Now I didn't mention this in our last point,
- But **in the qualifications for Elders** nothing is mentioned about their **belief**.
- And the same is true about **their testing**.
- Nothing is said about the need for an **elder to be tested**.
- So, the question is, why are there no qualifications for **belief and testing** of an **elder** who leads the church,
- But these qualifications do exist for a Deacon who serves the Church.
- And **I think** the answer has to do with **how long they've been a believer**.
- One of the qualifications for elder is that...

⁶ He must not be a recent convert... (1 Timothy 3:6)

- Which along with the other qualifications means that **an elder must have been around for a while**.
- There's no exact time frame given for how long a man must be a Christian before he can be an elder.
- But certainly, some substantial time must have passed since his initial belief.
- Which means that an elder's belief and way of life has been observed for a good amount of time,
- and his faith has certainly been tested.
- And he's passed the test, he is blameless.
- He's held faith with a good conscience.
- In fact, this is probably why the church is calling him to be an elder.
- So, an elder's faith and testing have been seen in their Christian lives because they are not a recent convert.

- **However**, there is no requirement that a **deacon not be a recent convert**.
- Even recent converts can and should serve in the church.
- But before **they are acknowledged** as Deacons, as serving members of the Church.
- It's important that we see they will hold to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.
- That what they believe is seen in how they live.
- And their faith and life in Christ is tested, and they are blameless.
- **That is, they pass the test of faith.**
- We don't want **to call people to serve in the church**,
- If their faith is questionable, because when the first difficulty hits them,
- they may reject Christ and leave the church.
- So, their faith must be tested, and they must prove themselves blameless before they qualify as an official Deacon of the church.
- So, what about this testing...
- **It doesn't** refer to some official deacons' test...
- But as I said it is the testing of their faith and their reputation.
- We simply need to ask the question, **does their walk match their talk**.
- As they proclaim to be followers of Jesus Christ.
- **Do they follow Jesus Christ.**
- Do they live in trust and obedience to the word of God.
- And when they've faced difficulty, have they come through it with their faith intact.
- Because the reality is, when you step-up and begin to serve Christ and his church.
- Pressures and difficulties will come your way.
- And it's important, for your sake and the sake of the church,
- to have some indication that those who are called to serve can endure those pressures and difficulties in ministry, in serving.
- So, we have seen a **Deacon's Dignity, Belief and Testing** and Paul then turns to...

4. A Deacon's Wife

- Verse 11...

¹¹ Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. (1 Timothy 3:11)

- Some argue that this verse describes the qualifications of **deaconesses**.
- **A female deacon.**
- They would translate the word "wives" (gy-ne in the Greek) as "women,"
- So that **verse 11** would read...

women likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. (1 Timothy 3:11)

- Now this is a **valid translation**.
- And there is evidence that an **order of deaconesses** did develop in the early church.
- We saw in **Romans 16:1...**

¹ I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant [deacon] of the church at Cenchree, (Romans 16:1)

- Also, in a letter from the **Roman Author Pliny** to the Roman emperor **Tajan**, written in **A.D. 112**,
- **Speaking of Christians**, **Pliny** mentions *two slave-women whom they call deaconesses*.
- So, it seems, early in the church, there was an **emerging order of deaconesses**.
- And that tradition has been **rightly passed** on to churches through the ages.
- Even though, **Scripture is clear that women cannot be elders**.
- There is no **Biblical reason** why women cannot be **Deacons or Deaconesses** if you prefer.
- As I said earlier, all believers (male and female) must be servants of Christ and his church.
- And if a church chooses to create the **office of Deacon**, **they can also create the office of Deaconess**.
- However, that being said...
- It's a bit of a stretch to read in **deaconesses here in 1 Timothy**,
- because **deacons (men)** are the focus both before and after **verse 11**.
- Also, the Greek word (**gy-ne**) that can be translated "wife" or "woman" has to be translated "wife" in verse 12 ("the husband of but **one wife**").
- So, it seems that verses 11 and 12 are referring not to women in General but specifically to wives of deacons.
- Paul is simply telling Timothy that **a deacon** must have a wife who, like himself, is dignified.
- That she too must watch what she says,

not slandering others.

- It's interesting that word **slanderers** is the **Greek word Diablos and** is usually translated **Devil**.
- So literally, a deacon's wife must not be a Devil.
- But this word is also used **metaphorically** to refer to slanderers, false accusers.
- The **Strong's Definition** of this word includes the following...

It speaks of one who, by opposing the cause of God, may be said to act the part of the devil or to side with him Satan the prince of the demons, the author of evil, persecuting good men, estranging mankind from God and enticing them to sin... (Strong's)

- **Basically**, Paul is telling Timothy that, like a Deacon who must not be a **double-talker**,
- His wife must also **watch what she says**, not falsely accusing others which is a common tactic of the Devil.

- Also, a deacon's wife must be

sober-minded.

- We saw this same qualification listed for elders.
- It literally means to be **temperate, refrain from alcohol.**
- But it also refers to **being clear-headed, thinking things through**, not being rash, or jumping to conclusions.
- And finally, a **Deacon's wife, like the Deacon** and the elder,

must be faithful in all things.

- She, like her husband, must have **true belief**, and **her belief** must be seen in her actions.
- She must be faithful to the Lord and Faithful to her husband!
- And you can see how these qualifications are important **for the wife of a deacon.**
- Or an elder for that matter.
- Because as any man who seeks to serve Christ knows,
- His wife's help and support is of **crucial importance** if he is going to **fulfill his duties.**
- This is just common-sense right.
- It speaks not only to the **nature of marriage** in which two become one,
- **They are to serve together.**
- But it also speaks to **the strength** that a **godly couple** will bring to **a deacon's ministry.**
- The character qualifications of deacons in **verse 8**,
- and of the similar qualifications for **their wives in verse 11**
- ensure that they will not only be **mutually dignified** but will have the same heart for ministry,
- That they can served Christ and his Church together.
- And now we come to the **final two related qualifications for a Deacon.**

5. A Deacon's Marriage and Household

- These qualifications are very similar to the **Marriage and household** qualifications for elders...

² Let deacons each be the husband of one wife... (1 Timothy 3:12)

- Like the elder, a deacon must be a **one-wife man.**
- No other **woman** can have his **affections** physically or emotionally.
- As Paul had **already** told the church in **Ephesus...**

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, (Ephesians 5:25)

- There's no **greater love than the love Christ has for his Church**.
- And husbands (including and especially Elders and Deacons) are to love their wives with this great love.
- As **John Piper** says...

He must pursue his own joy in the holy joy of his wife. (John Piper)

- A **one-wife-man** places his wife at the center of his heart.
- Not to worship, for that belongs to Christ alone, but to love, cherish, care for and share his life with.
- And this will produce **great benefits for all...**
- As the **King Solomon** declares...

⁹ Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. ¹⁰ For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! ¹¹ Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? ¹² And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken. (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)

- And in the **deacon's (or any Christian) marriage** that threefold cord includes Husband, Wife and Jesus Christ.
- And so, as a one-wife-Deacon faces **the pressures and difficulties of ministry**.
- He is not alone; he has the **Help of both his Wife and His Lord**.
- Now **along-side the Marriage qualification** there is also a **household qualification**.

managing their children and their own households well.

- This reflects the fact that deacons not only serve but they are servant-leaders as well.
- As with elders, **if** deacons are to manage/lead and minister to "God's household"
- They must manage/lead **their own household**, specifically their children well.
- Their children **must submit to the authority of their parents**.
- **So those are the qualifications for Deacons.**
- And it's **incumbent on each and every one of us**,
- whether we hold **an official position** in the church or not, **to seek to meet these qualifications**.
- Because every believer is to be **a servant of Christ and His Church!**

- Now unlike the elders (the leaders), the Deacons (the servants) are promised a reward.
- And so, we conclude with...

A Deacon's Reward

- In **verse 13** we read...

13 For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus. (1 Timothy 3:13)

- Now what does it mean **to serve well as a deacon**?
- Well, I think we could come up with a **number of descriptions** of good service in the church.
- All of which would involve **loving and caring for the physical, emotional, spiritual needs** of others.
- We see this in Jesus words...

39 ...You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (Matthew 22:39)

- And what does this look like practically,
- well, I think Jesus gives us a **good definition** of service when he,
- in what we call the golden rule, says...

12 So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them.... (Matthew 7:12)

- And Paul says something **similar to the church in Philippi**...

3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. (Philippians 2:3)

- So, from **these verses** and from what we've seen the Bible says about deacons (servants)...
- **I think we can conclude** that **serving well** involves loving people.
- Taking **care of their needs (physical, emotional and spiritual)**,
- as you would want your needs to be taken care of.
- Thinking and acting, not for yourself all the time **or even primarily**,
- But in humility **thinking and acting to meet the needs of others**.
- And with that definition **of serving well** in mind we come to the first reward...

those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves

- In the eyes of those **they serve in the body of Christ**, deacons will have respect and influence.
- And this just makes sense right,
- If you are **loving and caring** for the needs of others.
- If you are sacrificing your own time and energy for others,
- **then those people will look up to you.**
- They will respect you and you will have an influence in their lives.

- This is further seen in the qualifications of a deacon.
- When a man lives with dignity and **true belief** that is seen in **his actions**.
- When he passes **the tests of faith** and **is blameless**.
- When his **wife shares his dignity and is faithful in all things**.
- When his **commitment to his wife is clear**.
- And when he manages/leads **his children and household well**.
- All of this makes him a great example of **SERVICE to Christ and the Church**.

- And therefore, gives him an **excellent standing with God's people**.
- His **humble service** produces **an authority** that goes far beyond words.
- **So, the first reward of good service is good standing in the church.**

- And the **second aspect of the deacons' reward is that they have**

great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

- They have confidence, **even boldness**, in **their own faith in Christ**.
- As a **deacon (a servant) serves well**, as **he lives out his faith**.
- As his walk matches his talk.
- As he **loves and cares for the needs** of his fellow believers in the church.
- And as he faithfully serves, reaches out to his community.
- He understands, **like no other**, that **his sacrificial service** does not and cannot come from **himself**.
- He knows **his own selfish sinful tendencies**.
- And when he **overcomes those tendencies** and serves others well.
- He known it **is God and work in and through him**.
- His service, he knows, is a manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit in his life.
- There is no other explanation!!!
- And that produces **great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus**.
- His sacrificial service reveals to him and others that **by God's Grace through faith**
- he is in an **ever-growing relationship with God through Jesus Christ**.
- And it's this **great confidence**, knowing he is secure in his faith,
- That he is living not for this world but the next.
- That gives him the power to serve well, to sacrificially Christ and his Church in this life.
- **And that my friends is what we need in the church today.**
- We need men and women who have **great confidence in their faith in Jesus Christ**.
- Because it is **those people** who are **willing to sacrificially serve in tangible ways**.
- For they **know the importance** of caring for the **needs of others**.

- We need **Deacons, Deaconesses, Servants.**
- People who **are not just willing**, but joyfully **embrace cleaning the church, fixing toilets,**
- running the sound and video and slides.
- People who embrace teaching children, making the coffee,
- serving food and handing out the bulletins.
- And **we also need people** who embrace **visiting the sick and caring (being there) for those who are experiencing difficulties in their lives.**
- **Bottom line**, we need people who are willing to sacrifice **their time and energy for others.**
- And I think, one of the most **important areas of service** that Bridges **needs at this time is Prayer.**
- **Yes, prayer is service**, it's not always **easy or FUN**,
- **especially** in our fast-paced **entertainment-oriented** culture.
- But if we **truly believe** that **God is Sovereign** over all.
- And if we **believe that God has a plan for his Church here are Bridges.**
- Then we must take (**no make**) the time to **serve this church and God's kingdom...**
- by calling upon the Lord to work in and through each and every one of us.
- So that we, **by the power of God's spirit**, might **serve well.**
- That we might continue to have an impact on the lives of **people who attend this church,**
- Caring for their spiritual and physical and emotional needs.
- **And through them (us) we might have a impact on people throughout the world.**
- Would you pray with me to that end.