

“The Church Will Always Need Leaders!”

Titus 1:5-9

Intro. – Are these examples of “real men”? Going to look at passage that addresses this matter. It speaks of the kind of men elders/pastors are to be. I pray what we study today be more than helpful, I pray it’ll be convicting!

Not an easy matter to be an elder in the local church. You open yourself up to blatant scrutiny and criticism – criticism for being less than you could be. In a sense, there is nothing you can do about this, because there are no perfect leaders in a church. Certainly, I’m not a perfect preacher. Ask my family!

Illus. – Paul Harvey: “Help Wanted: A preacher. One who’ll preach precisely 20 min. then sit down. He must condemn sin but hurt nobody’s feelings. Hours be 8 AM to 10 PM daily. Salary is \$800 a week in which he is expected to wear nice clothes, buy books, upkeep his family, drive a newer car and give \$100 @ wk back to the church. He must have a burning desire to work with young people and spend all his time with the elderly. He must make 15 visits a day to homes and hospital and never be absent from the office. Any preacher meeting these qualifications may apply at the church – any church. You’re *the one* for whom they all are looking.”

Learned long ago you can’t possible meet everyone’s expectation of me as a preacher. Also learned anyone going to lead in the church going to run into the same situation. No such thing as perfect elder/pastor. Let me tell why. An elder/pastor by definition is a member of a local church where no member of that church does not daily need cleansing blood of Jesus. So, just as there are no perfect preachers there’re no perfect elder/pastors.

This is not what is being asked of elders/pastors. What is being asked is they be men who display progress in their lives by being *remade* in the image of Jesus by the power of His Spirit in them. These are to be men whom the rest of the church family can *follow* and *imitate*. Because of this, church will always need leaders.

Purpose: to grow in our understanding of the constant need for true Biblical elders/pastors

I MAIN POINT OF THIS TEXT

A. Providing Leadership for the Church is the Task of Some

1. God never honored by chaos – some must lead the church. Paul left Titus on Crete for this task...!
 - a. Paul laid groundwork for *inter-generational church* = church just as strong 2,3,4 generations
 - b. means there MUST be deposit of God’s Truth successfully passed on from gen. to gen.
 - c. why essential Titus stop debating about peripheral matters and start developing church leaders
2. 1:10-11 “*For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach, for the sake of sordid gain.*”
 - a. the word *For* introduces the reason we have Titus 1:5-9
 - b. Crete had same problems we have today – people teaching/living/ falsehood & calling it truth.
3. Such being the case – God’s divine strategy is NOT to have a circuit preacher going from city to city putting out fires. His plan is that each local church have strong, Biblical leaders who seize the responsibility of *passing the faith along* to each succeeding generation.

B. Developing Leaders Should be the Goal of All

1. Intriguing thing about qualifications for elders/pastors in Titus is that there is nothing particularly special about these character qualities...
2. Titus 1:5-9 is a profile for Christian maturity for all believers – i.e. all who profess Christ as Lord and Savior should have traits and be looking to develop them further in their life.
3. Hebrews 13:7 “*Remember your leaders, who spoke the Word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.*”
4. 1 Peter 5:3 elders instructed “...*not lord it over the flock.*” i.e. they’re to be examples above all!
5. Illus. 1865 just after Civil War, black man entered well to do church in Richmond, VA. Came time for communion, practice of this church to use one cup. Got up, came to the front. Whole church gasped. Many were incensed. Then, stately gentleman arose, walked down beside the black man and shared the cup with him = Robert E. Lee...
6. Such is what elders are for churches – we don’t need role models from secular world... We need models of Christian character and integrity = elders must be these models/examples!
7. Not everyone can be an elder, but everyone here should aspire to have the character of elders...

C. The Vital Mark of Character

1. V 6 first thing mentioned = “...*elder must be blameless*” and says it again in v 7
 - a. note: didn’t say *sinless* but did say their conduct shouldn’t give opportunity for critics...
 - b. Church will always have detractors and first place they’ll look to criticize the church is in the leadership. If they can find a lack of integrity in leadership, they’ll discredit/ dismiss church...
2. Sum it up with the word *integrity* – 1 Timothy 3:2 – first qualification of an elder “... *must be above reproach.*” Later in v 7 “...*must also have a good reputation with outsiders.*”
3. Illus. – Cleveland Stroud retired basketball coach in Conyers, Georgia. Coached Rockdale High School. Won state championship, but Coach Stroud learned in first playoff game, he let a boy play the last 45 seconds. Didn’t make a difference for by then game been decided. But that boy had failed in one class and was ineligible. Cleveland Stroud had a decision. Decided give championship trophy back, forfeit title. Naturally, some in Conyers were upset and severely criticized the Coach. His response? “I told my team; ‘Years from now no one will remember the score of the basketball games but they will always remember what you are made of.’”
4. This is what God is looking for in an elder – you want to remember what he’s made of...

II THE INTEGRITY OF ELDERS MUST HOLD

- being *blameless* carries the idea of a man full of integrity... He is a man of truth!

A. Relational Integrity (v 7)

1. Realize what family life on Crete was like = Dad was pirate/thief seeing how many he could swindle if he wasn’t drunk... Mom was a gossip and a drunk... Kids were running wild in the streets if they hadn’t already been sold to military camp to make extra money for mom and dad...
2. the first thing Paul says in being *blameless* is to find a man who has his family in order.
3. V 6 has been used by legalist to support deductions that have nothing to do with the intent of this text. All Paul is saying is find a man whose family life doesn’t discredit the church/Gospel!
4. Home is as much a training ground for an elder/pastor as church is. Nobody knows that man better than his wife and kids! Is his family *following* him?!

B. Personal Integrity (v 8)

1. Paul starts out telling what elder should NOT be in v 7 (description of a man on Crete)...
2. Paul then says, “This is what a man should be” – 1:8 “*but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled.*”
 - a. *hospitable* = i.e. be willing to make sacrifice for the cause of Christ and be an example in this
 - b. sounds as though the traits Crete needed modeled are the traits Americans need modeling!

C. Doctrinal Integrity (v 9)

1. This verse presupposes a body of doctrine already fixed = i.e. elders’ job not to change Gospel... elders’ job to learn, teach, and defend it keeping it safe passing it on to the next generation...
2. Must resist temptation to *bend* “the truth” to culture... instead need to bend culture to *the truth*...
3. Titus 2:7 “*In all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine...*”
4. Don’t be political i.e. don’t be known as a man who will say what he thinks people want him to say in order to make them happy for the moment...
5. Note: don’t believe this means elders have to be talented, effective public speakers etc.... but do believe it means elders ought to be able to apply Scripture and defend Scripture life situations...
6. Elders hold firmly to the truth and they don’t hesitate to pass it along to next generation. They endorse what is truth and oppose what is false...
7. See now why we need elders? There is no greater responsibility in the church than that of serving as an elder... There is not greater privilege either... Easy to criticize elder... not easy being one...

Conclusion: In summary, I pray you better understand now for 21 centuries the Church hasn't just survived but His Church has thrived. Why? Because we have a God Who is alive. Because His Word is changeless, and because we have had faithful leaders in the past pass this Word on to the next generation.

Illus. – recent survey taken as to what made great leaders: “Characteristics of an Admired Leader”

- 1) Competent = 58%
- 2) Inspiring = 62%
- 3) Visionary = 71%
- 4) Honesty/Integrity = 87%

I hope by looking at this text you have noticed one obvious matter. When it comes to elders/pastors we're not talking so much what they DO but what they ARE!

I want to conclude with this point: Christianity is not about promoting *religion*. Christianity is all about promoting a new life in Christ! We didn't talk about how religious elders were; instead, we studied about what kind of lives they live. The message of Christianity is not about “you people ought to go to church...etc.” The message is “do you know your life needs and can be made anew and restored into the image of Christ?” That's why when we look, train and encourage leaders in this church we put the emphasis on *character*. Why? Because that's where God puts the emphasis in His Word the Bible. His desire is to see elders/pastors be walking testimonies to the life changing power of His grace. They model Titus 2:11-14. Thus, the message of the Church of Christ in Eaton, OH is NOT “You need to sprinkle a little religion in your life...” Our message is “Through the grace of God you can be made totally new!” Christianity is all about new life, not about promoting religion. Therefore, the church will always need leaders!