

## Titus 1:5-9

### ~ Healthy Church Leadership ~

#### Introduction

In his small yet encouraging book titled “*Church Elders*” author & pastor Jeramie Rinne writes a very moving & emotionally rich sentence – he says:

*Many pastors today could write a book titled: “What they **didn’t** tell me in seminary about pastoral ministry...”*

*That book would probably have some painful & heavy chapters; “How to survive an ugly business meeting” **or** what to say at the funeral...of a 3-year-old child...”*

*Pastoral ministry involves [many] forms of suffering, discouragement, and heartbreak; for which no school can prepare a man...*

*But ministry **also holds** happy surprises. No one in seminary told me that I would fall in love with my congregation, or that I would have a front-row seat to watch God’s faithfulness & the Gospel’s power working in people’s lives.*

*[Further] no one told me about the joy & satisfaction I would receive from working with un-paid elders – men who despite demanding work schedules & busy home lives, sacrifice [their] time & money, tears & prayers, to lead their local churches. I love watching them wrestle, [struggling] through challenges, making mistakes, and maturing in the process. It's like hanging out with the 12 Disciples: ordinary, flawed men fulfilling an extraordinary calling by God's grace...”*

*Ordinary flawed men – fulfilling an extraordinary calling by God's grace – I think that would be an accurate description of our passage in Titus 1, here today!*

*Ordinary **flawed** men – fulfilling an extraordinary calling by God's grace!*

## **Recap**

If you are just joining us here this morning; we are in the book of Titus...

Titus was a handbook written for healthy churches – churches that seek to reflect the nature & character **of the Lord Jesus Christ** to a dead & dying world!

It was a book written **for the Church**, so that the nature & character **of the Church** would reflect **the nature & character of God!**

Throughout the book, we “*the Apostle Paul*” instructing Titus to teach what accords with **sound doctrine; life giving doctrine!**

That word **sound** there is where we get our English word *hygiene* from; it literally means to be healthy & in good working order!

It’s purpose is to demonstrate the **quality of belief** that God’s people are to have in matters of both faith & practice!

So that **when churches** are sound in the faith!

Sound in **leadership!**

In **Doctrine!**

In **Devotion!**

In **Discipleship!**

In **Discipline!**

In **Preaching!**

In **Teaching!**

In all of these things! When Churches are reflecting the beauty, & the health, & the holiness of God – then the Gospel will flourish – God will be glorified; and the watching world will know what our King Jesus is truly like!

Titus is a handbook for healthy Churches!

And so Paul leaves (his young son in the faith) Titus on the island of Crete so that he can:

*“Put into order that which was left undone...”*

Titus is **NOT** an Apostle – he is an apostolic delegate! **He represents the Apostle** without actually being an Apostle himself!

This is why Paul opens up his letter with:

*Paul, a servant of God & **an Apostle** of Jesus Christ!*

So that when **Titus** reads this letter, to the various Churches, on the Island of Crete – everyone will know that **Titus is in** with Paul!

He’s Paul’s right hand man – he knows the Apostle!

As one preacher has said:

*He's not batman...he's Robin! Paul is batman – Titus is his sidekick (Robin)...And Robin can still whip your tail, but he doesn't get to wear the cool suit.*

And so he doesn't have as much authority, or power, as the Apostle; but **he's still a boss** when it comes to planting Churches!

And so (as the apostolic delegate) left on this island of Crete, Titus was to:

*“Put into order that which was left undone...”*

And this morning, we're going to see Paul's first directive given to Titus, on how he was **to put these Churches in to order!**

This morning's we're going to see what **God's standards are** for those who would **love & lead** His flock!

## **Main Point**

The main point for this morning is simple:

## [SLIDE]

Good shepherds image the Good Shepherd in both character & conviction X2

### Outline

And we're gonna see this in 2 points:

In verses 5-8 – Godly Character

&

In verse 9 – Godly Conviction

### Titus 1:5-9

So if you have your bibles, Titus chapter 1 beginning in verse 5 – hear now the precious words of God given to His bride:

*“The reason I left you in Crete was to set right what was left undone **and**, as I directed you, to appoint elders in every town...”*

### Opening Gambit

Since the birth of the Church given in the New Testament epoch of time, the repeated pattern we see for establishing healthy Churches has **always been** to establish godly men!

In the book of Acts we are told that Paul (on his first missionary journey) had gone around (city to city) preaching the gospel – & establishing healthy churches – but Luke **also informs us** that Paul returned to those cities so that he could (quote):

*Appointed elders for them in every Church* – Acts chapter  
14

So it is **no surprise therefore**, when we open up the words of Paul given to Titus on the Island of Crete; **the, very, first, thing** that Titus was to do on the island was to appoint elders for them in every Town!

So crucial was this very task, it formed Paul's first directive to Titus!

Verse 5:

*This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town...*

## **Set Right**

The Greek word used for *setting into order* is (no surprise) a medical term! It was used in the ancient world to refer to

medical doctors who would straighten crooked teeth & heal broken bones...

And so Paul (in keeping with this theme of building healthy Churches) he informs Titus that he is to:

***Set right what is broken...***

***Fix that which is crooked...***

***& Mend the hearts of those walking in sin...***

This is the job – this is the task – this is the purpose; of every healthy Church that loves Jesus Christ, & the Gospel of grace!

Get these Churches to look **more** like Jesus, and **less** like the culture that they're in!

And **the very first way** that Titus was to do this (to accomplish this task); was to appoint godly men, who would **lead & love** the Church in both their **doctrine** & in their **devotion!**

Paul knew that the life of the Church & the health of its members was **dependent** upon the character of its leaders...  
This was a noble task...



This was **crucial** in the mind of Paul – and **if this was crucial** in the mind of Paul, it **must** be crucial **in our own minds** as well!

### **Plurality of Elders**

In fact **so crucial (so urgent)** was this task; that he even uses the **plural noun** for elders there in verse 5 (did you see that):

Appoint elders [**plural**] in every town **singular**!

The assumption here is that there would be **more than one elder** in every local Church!

In Acts chapter 14, Paul & Barnabas returned to the surrounding cities to:

*Appointed elders for them in every church [**singular**]*

James (the half brother of Jesus) instructed the Church to “*Call upon the elders [**plural**] of the Church (**singular**) to pray & to anoint them with oil...*”

Paul greeted the overseers [**plural**] of the Church of God [**singular**] in Philippi!

In Acts 20:28 Paul urges the Ephesian elders to be “*overseers*”  
[**plural**] for the flock of God [**singular**]

This is the **purpose** & this is the **pattern** that is laid out in the  
New Testament Scriptures – we are to have a **plurality** of elders  
in every Church **singular**!

The moment you have one single guy ruling & governing an  
entire congregation; then you **no longer** have a biblically  
structured Church!

Churches are **never** meant to be a **one, man, show**!

There is to be a plurality of elders in one local Church; ruling;  
governing; overseeing, & Shepherding **together**!

### **Same Authority**

So what this means is that our elder (Danny Hindle) has **just as**  
**much** authority as Craig Lloyd – who has **just as much**  
authority as Murray Hudson – who has **just as much** authority  
as “*the next elder...*”

There’s no hierarchy in the eldership!

A **Plurality** of elders – in every Church **singular**!

## Identifying these men

But how would we begin to identify such men?!?!?

How are the members of a local body to judge whether a **man** is suitable for the task of leading the flock?!?!?

Do we look for talent? Or Skill? Or speaking Ability? Or Age?  
Or Maturity?

What are the standards that God has for His Church?!?!?

Well thankfully Paul anticipates this, and so he tells us there in verse 6!

## Shepherds in the Home

A good shepherd is to image the Good Shepherd **firstly in** the home – Verse 6:

*“An elder must be blameless: the husband of one wife, with faithful children who are **not** accused of wildness or rebellion...”*

## Above reproach

What is immediately obvious in this list of virtues is Paul’s command for Titus to look for character **NOT** gifting!

2 times in 2 verses, Paul accentuates the fact that an elder is to be **blameless**; or *above reproach*... (in verses 6 & 7)

And as one who has some self-interest in how you're understanding this list – let me be the first to say (real quick) that blameless does **NOT** mean perfect!

It does not mean faultless, or flawless, or sinless!

If that were the case, there would be **no elders!**

Elders are **flawed men**; fulfilling **an extraordinary calling** by God's grace!!!

Rather, this word blameless has the sense of:

*Not living a life that brings shame on the Gospel!*

*Not living a life that questions your love for Jesus Christ!*

It means to live a life that images Jesus and the Gospel, **in such a way** that when a person looks at the life of an elder they ask themselves the question:

*Why is he so different to all the other men in this world!?!?*

So that when they look at an elder in a Church – they can see remnants of Jesus and His work in their life!

There is no question of Jesus & the Gospel in his life!!!

I like what Thabiti says in his book on elder qualifications – he says:

*Being above reproach means that an elder is to be the kind of man whom **no one suspects** of wrong-doing or immorality. People would be shocked to hear this kind of man charged with such acts!*

Living a life that honours Jesus Christ in both character & conduct means that he **does NOT** bring shame on the Gospel!

It does **not** mean **faultless**, but blameless!

Does he live a life that honours Jesus Christ in both the home and the heart...

**The husband of one wife**

And so to make sure that no one here misunderstands **what Paul means** when **he uses the word *blameless***; he goes on to give examples of **what it looks like** for an elder to be blameless!

He says there in verse 6 – an elder must be **the husband of one wife!** X2

There's been a lot of debate on what this actually means... I **don't think** he's saying here that every elder has to be married and have a wife!

Otherwise this would rule out Paul – not to mention Jesus... and really; any rule that keeps Jesus & Paul from being elders in your local church, (can we just agree) that's really dumb – that's a silly rule...

When you think that Jesus is disqualified from being an elder in your Church because of his marital status... probably NOT a good way to understand that verse...

So **I don't think** this means an elder must be married or have children!

## **Not Polygamy**

**Nor do I think** that Paul was thinking of polygamy here... though that may be **implicit** in the text (and it certainly rules it out); the Cretans **weren't** exactly known in their culture for having more than one wife!

And so polygamy doesn't seem to fit the view here either! (though that can be implied)...

## **Divorcees**

And **I also think** that Paul **wasn't speaking about** those who have been divorced and remarried as elders...

Though that certainly has implications for our culture here at Grace!

I don't think Paul is speaking about **divorcees** here, because he would have made that much clearer in the text – he would have used different words...

## **If you've ever been divorced**

The other reason why this **isn't** speaking of **divorce & remarriage** is because, this is **not** talking about things that **you've ever done** in your life... like he's not gonna say:

*“If you’ve ever been drunk you **can’t** be an elder – or if you’ve ever been hot tempered, or if you’ve ever been greedy then you **can’t** be an elder!”*

So it doesn’t seem to fit, to say: **If you’ve ever been divorced** you **can’t** be an elder – otherwise you’d have to hold that logic for every other mark...

Further!!! What happens if your wife dies and you remarry? If this is **literally** “*the husband of one wife*” – then **even though** death breaks the marriage vow; this is still your second wife right?!?!

So it can’t be talking about having a second or third wife because he would have been explicit in that!

### **Be faithful to your wife**

This simply means that Titus is to look for a man who is devoted to his wife!

A man who adores his wife!

A man who longs for his wife!

A man who is faithful to his wife!



**His** heart belongs to **her** – and **her** heart belongs to **him**!

And they have Christ as the foundation of their marriage!

This literally says:

*A one-woman man!*

These men; are one **women men** – devoted to their wives; in love with their wives; faithful to their wives!

There is not a hint of immorality with these men!

They love their wives – they adore their wives – they respect their wives!

That's the kind of men who lead the Church of God!

## **Jesus and His bride**

And the reason why **this quality is first on his list** – is because this is exactly the way that Jesus looks at us!

Jesus loves the Church!

Jesus adores His Church!

Jesus looks at us with a special kind of love for His bride  
because Jesus is a one-woman man!

In the same way brothers, Paul says for you to love your wives!

Love your wife **like Christ loved the Church...**

## **Men!**

Does your wife know that she is loved?!?!

Does your wife know that she is adored?!?!

Is she treated as a precious object in your eyes?!?!

Are you washing her over daily with the Word?!?!

Are you teaching her the Gospel; teaching her salvation;  
teaching her the doctrine of sin; teaching her the holiness  
of God!

Does she know that she is safe with the man who is  
leading her heart theologically?!?!

Are you digging into your wife's heart when you get home from work?!?!?

Are you being faithful to your wife behind closed doors?!?!?

Do you speak well of your wife to others at work – or do you malign her?!?!?

Do people know, that you love your wife?!?!?

Do you tell those women at your work that you love your wife?!?!?

Do people know that your wife is adored in your life!

That's what Paul's talking about here!

Elders are to be a one-woman man imaging Jesus in the home!

He is a man **devoted to his wife**, because Jesus is devoted to His!!!

## **Faithful children**

And so, closely related to being faithful to your wife (Paul Says) is being faithful to your children...

Verse 6:

*“With faithful children who are **not** accused of wildness or rebellion...”*

Now many people have struggled on how to understand this verse – some of your translations might have *believing* children (or *if the children are believers*)!

Now I don't think that Paul is saying that elders **must** have believing children who are regenerate in Christ; though that is certainly ideal...

It doesn't seem to fit the bill... Partly because it would seem strange to guarantee the salvation of a child simply because they are the son or daughter of an elder!

Rather **what I think Paul means** by the word faithful (or believing) is **what he goes on to say** in the next clause – so he goes on to explain what he means by faithful:

*They **are not to be** accused of wildness or rebellion...*

That word *wild* here **literally means** an inability to save – it speaks of someone who just prodigally goes & wastes their resources on wreckless living (like the son in Luke 15)...

It's the kind of insubordination that such a child would be showing to their parents by **publically behaving** in a wild & rebellious way!

### **Children are to be submissive**

Elders **must** have children who love their dad & they respect their dad!

That they know he is the head of the home!

That he knows how to manage his household well!

That he is constantly teaching his children the Gospel!

And they respect his leadership & way of life – **even if they are not saved!**

They know that dad is the head, and that he sacrificially gives his time, talents, tears, and efforts to lead their family in the Gospel!

### **Same Greek in verse 9**

In fact, the word Paul uses here is the same Greek word used down in verse 9 when he speaks about:

*Holding to the **faithful** message* – that’s the same word used here of children in verse 6!

And so I think Paul is clear!

Although no father is responsible for the **conversion** of their child; **they are in some part** responsible for the **submission** of their child!

We’re not talking about a child who gets upset at dad, or lashes out at dad...

We’re talking about a **deep-seated hatred** for authority!

A child who behaves in in a wild & wreckless way!

So Paul says – A man who **cannot** lead his own family well – **cannot** lead the family of God!

This is what he tells Timothy in 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy chapter 3:

*For an elder must manage his own household **well**, with all dignity keeping his children **submissive**,<sup>5</sup> for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?*

The family (it seems) is taken by Paul to be indicative of the kind of spiritual leader this man is going to be in the Church!

So that if the Gospel has **not** transformed this man's heart & this man's home; then he's **not** qualified to lead the family of God!

That's what this means!

## **Public life**

**But NOT** only is the Gospel to transform this man's heart & this man's home – it's also to transform his **public ministry** – his public life!

## Imaging Jesus in the Church

Verse 7:

*“As an overseer of God’s household, he must be blameless...”*

Now again, what does it mean for an elder to be blameless in front of others? Well he goes on to explain in verses 7 & 8...

And notice **how quickly** Paul throws these out!

Almost in rapid-fire succession does Paul give the list of qualifications – Verse 7:

### **NOT Arrogant**

He must NOT be *arrogant* – that is self-willed or overbearing...

### **NOT Hot Tempered**

He must NOT be *hot-tempered* – someone who is easily provoked to anger & fits of rage!

### **NOT a Drunkard**

He must NOT be a *drunkard* or *excessive drinker* – that is, someone who is addicted to wine or alcohol in such a way that



he loses sober judgement – the Bible does **not** forbid elders drinking; it forbids them getting drunk!

Now this makes a lot of sense right – the guy making all of these decisions for your church; probably shouldn't show up to an elders' meeting plastered...

There just seems to be a lot of wisdom in that!

If he's gonna do counselling with people – if he's gonna give sound judgment & godly wisdom then he needs to be sober when he does so!

So he must NOT be addicted to wine!

### **NOT a bully**

Fourthly – *He must not be violent (or a bully)* – the King James says “*not a striker...*” that is **NOT** violent or prone to physical anger!

Jesus never once struck His sheep!

He never once beat people up!

He never once physically lashed out at someone else because of sinful rage!

In the same way, an elder **can't just go around** punching sheep in the neck... That's **not** going to change hearts!

In pastoral ministry, you're going to have moments, that will call your anger out **frequently**, and **if your only solution** is physical violence, then you're not gonna have much success in Gospel transformation!

## **Greedy**

Lastly; he must ***NOT be greedy for money*** – this is so basic!

As an overseer of God's Church, money is NOT your motive; Christ is!

An elder loves the broken people in his Church – he **doesn't love** money!

Let me tell you – the amount of tears, and pain, and sorrow, and heartbreak I see Pastor Craig go through **weekly** is evidence that he's **NOT** in this for money!

If an elder of the Church, is in this game for money, he's gonna burn out real quick!

He must have a heart for the sheep – **not** for their money!

## **Positively in verse 8**

And so if these are the characteristics that are **NOT** to characterize the elder & his Church, what should an elder be doing – what should an elder be about?

## **Hospitable**

We'll notice the positives in verse 8:

As an overseer of God's household he must be:

*“Hospitable, a lover of good, sensible, righteous, holy, self-controlled...”*

## **Carson & Dever**

D.A Carson has noted that what's remarkable about this list is how **unremarkable** this list is... he says:

*“...All of the qualifications listed here are elsewhere in the New Testament **demand**ed of all Christian believers...**NOT** just elders”*

## **Cretan Culture**

And so **it appears that** Paul gives this list for 2 reasons:

1. To identify the men who were to lead the Church of God
2. But secondly, so that the churches in Crete; and **specifically the elders** were able to commend the Gospel to the outsiders of the Church looking in!

This list appears to be in stark contrast to the Cretan way of life – & therefore elders would have **stood out** in the culture!

Cretans were **known in the ancient world** for being treacherous & unjust; drunkards & gluttons; wicked & evil men!

Chapter 1 verse 12 informs us that:

*“Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, & lazy gluttons.”*

And so this list appears in a lot of ways as, normal, ordinary, Christianity – because Paul wrote these things knowing that they were completely **unlike** the culture they were in!

And brothers & sisters if the Church of God is to be anything in this world, she must be a place of truth; justice; & holiness...

She must honour the Gospel and proclaim the Gospel through both doctrine & devotion – that’s what’s at stake here in these leaders!

That’s why Paul lists these attributes!

To find these men; **who love God and the Gospel in every sphere of their lives!**

**NOT just** in their home!

New Testament scholar Ray Van Neste drives home this point when he says:

*“As **goes** the moral character of the church leader, **so goes** the church...”*

### **David Hume Story**

David Hume, the renowned philosopher of skepticism in the 18th century, was caught running through the streets of London, and nearing the outskirts of a crowd listening to the renowned evangelist George Whitefield preaching the gospel.

When a friend queried Hume on his hurriedness and learned of his destination, the friend said, “You don’t believe what

Whitefield preaches, do you?” he preaches about Jesus & the Gospel; & sin & salvation... do you actually believe that?!?!

And Hume replied, “No, I don’t... not for one second!!! **But HE DOES!**” X2

*Find men who image Christ in such a way that **even unbelievers in the culture** recognize the unique character this man has in the world!*

Friends! If the Church of God is to be anything in this world, she must be a bastion of truth & holiness for the Gospel of God!

And that starts; **first & foremost** in finding leaders who image Jesus Christ!

Their doctrine must drive their devotion – and their devotion must display their doctrine!

They must teach the Word of God & believe the Word of God!

They must be zealous in their character & zealous in their convictions!

## Godly Convictions

And that is exactly what we find here in our second point this morning:

*Good shepherds image the **Good Shepherd** in **their Convictions**.*

**[SLIDE]**

Have a look at verse 9:

*As an overseer of God's household he must be *holding to the faithful message as taught, so that he will be able **both** to encourage with sound teaching and to refute those who contradict it.**

### **He must hold firm**

So an elder must **NOT only** be **above reproach** in both character & conduct – but He must **also** be holding firmly to the trustworthy Word in the bible!

*Literally – holding the Word according to the teaching!*

The teaching of Christ, instructed to Paul!

The teaching of Paul, given to Titus!

The teaching of Paul, instructed to Titus, seen in the bible, is what he **must teach & teach well!**

**The defining factor** of an elder's ministry; is that he is able to **teach sound doctrine** that accords with godliness!

This is the difference between the elder & the Church member!

An elder **must be qualified** to teach – a Church member **does not!**

He must **hold firmly** (with a vice-like grip) to the faithful message of the gospel – the faithful message is shorthand for the Gospel!

The faithful message is what Paul has already told us in verse 2 – the faithful message is:

*“The God who **cannot lie** has promised eternal life before time began, so that at the proper time, **in the fullness of time**, all those who trust in Christ for the salvation of their sin, may have complete forgiveness & total peace through the cross of Christ!”*



An elder must love the Gospel!!!

He must be passionate about that Gospel – He must teach, & preach, & proclaim the Gospel – **So that** he can teach **the sound doctrine** of the Gospel that reveals, and protects; & applies **the truth** of the Gospel!

An elder is to be doctrinally sound **in the Gospel** - & **everything** to do with the Gospel!

That! is the unique role of the elder!

**Doesn't need to hold attention**

Now this **doesn't mean** that he must get up on a Sunday for 45 minutes & hold people's attention!

It **doesn't mean** that he must be an eloquent speaker – explaining the bible with humour & parody!

It **doesn't mean** that he must be writing books, signing cheques, and standing on the stage with John Piper!

What **it means** is that **he is able to theologically** take a man, from point A to point B using the bible!

That he is able to open up the Word, encourage the flock, rebuke the wolves, using the bible...

He is able to teach *that which accords with sound doctrine* & the faithful message of the Gospel so that those who hear his message; will grow in God and their love for His bride!

That's the first thing – a man **who is devoted to the Gospel** & teaches the Gospel, **in accordance with** sound doctrine that **adorns the Gospel!**

### **Refute wolves**

But secondly – he must be a man **who uses the Gospel** to refute those who **oppose** the Gospel!

### **John Calvin**

John Calvin (the French Reformer) said that:

*“Every pastor has 2 voices; one to gather the sheep; and one for driving away wolves & thieves...”*

Elders need a voice that encourages & rebukes – proclaims & protects – reproves & refutes!

## Acts 20

This is what Paul tells us in Acts Chapter 20 when he addresses the Ephesian elders – he says:

*Pay **careful attention** to yourselves and to **all the flock!***

Now stop!

That's exactly what he says here in Titus chapter 1 – pay **careful** attention to yourselves (the character, conduct, & convictions of your life) **but also**, pay **careful** attention to the flock! That is; encourage, admonish, build up, & protect the flock **with sound doctrine!**

So:

*Pay **careful** attention to yourselves and to all the flock in which the Holy Spirit has made you **overseers**, to **shepherd** the church of God, which He [has] obtained with His own blood. [For] I know that after my departure **fierce wolves** will come in among you, **not sparing the flock**. Men will rise up **even from your own number** and **distort the truth** to lure the disciples into following them... **Therefore be on alert...**”*

The household of God – the family of God – the flock of God is **the precious possession** of God Himself which He has purchased Himself **with His own blood!**

*God Himself has sent His Son & crushed His Son under the full weight of His righteous wrath of His Holy anger, because of our sin!*

*And He did this in order to forgive the sin, of all those who turn from their sin, & trust in Him for the forgiveness of that sin...*

*And in His divine mercy... He has adopted us by His grace; through Jesus Christ, so that... we may become **His precious possession!***

And **this** brothers & sisters is what God has left in the hands of those, who would lead His Church!

There **must be a plurality of elders** in every Church **singular** – and these elders **MUST** be above reproach in their character, conduct, & calling – because there are **fierce wolves** seeking to destroy your faith, and steal you away into hell!

That's why this passage is important!

Because we need the right men for the job!

### **Mark Dever Quote**

Let me finish here today with a quote that I often read when I know I'm going to preach – it's a paragraph from a book on preaching written by Mark Dever.

And this is something I try to read every time I get into the pulpit – just so that I can remember the weight, and the burden, and the magnitude that God has placed upon me, and all of the elders here at Grace when we teach the trustworthy Word of the Bible – here's what he says:

*Is there anything quite like the few seconds right before you open your mouth to preach... the music is done, everything is quiet, all eyes in the building are on you. You step into the pulpit, open up your bible, lay out your notes... and pause. Or at least I do.*

*For just two seconds – maybe three – I pause... and before I begin speaking my eyes scan the congregation, maybe even make a split-second's eye contact with some... it's not for effect, nor is it to try & gather attention; the way a school teacher falls silent when her class is getting restless...*

*No, that tiny pause is for me. It's to remind myself why I'm there, to press into my heart one last time the **enormity** of what I'm doing:*

*“These people I think, belong to Jesus. they are His, He loved them, He spilled His blood for them, and He has put all the resources of omnipotence behind His determination to bring them safely home. And now, for the next hour, He's putting them... in my hands. To teach them & encourage them...”*

## **Conclusion**

Brothers & sisters, the Good shepherd has left the Church of God in the hands of those who are called to teach – those called by God to model Jesus & to be above reproach in their character, conduct, & calling!

To shepherd the flock – to guide the flock – to love the flock – to protect the flock – & to encourage the flock!

This is the task – this is the calling – & this is the character that all stewards of God's household **MUST** have!

If the Church of God is to be bastion of truth – a pillar of holiness – and a healthy reflection of the beauty & grace of the Lord Jesus Christ then she must have godly leaders who model this truth!

Good shepherds image the Good Shepherd because Jesus Christ has purchased this flock with **His own blood** – and it is on them to teach them & encourage them, so that He can bring them safely home...

Let's Pray

## Discussion Questions

### Titus 1:5-9

**Main Point:** *Good shepherds image the Good Shepherd in both character & conviction*

**Q1.** Why do you think the health & life of a Church is reflected in the conduct & character of its leaders?

**Q2.** Do you think it's biblical (or even necessary) to have a plurality of elders in one local Church? Why or why not?

**Q3.** Read Acts 11:30; Acts 14:23; Acts 15:4, 22; Acts 16:4; Acts 20:17; 1 Timothy 4:14, 17; Titus 1:5; James 5:14; 1 Peter 5:1 –In every single instance we have of Church governance & structure in the New Testament; the typical pattern for each local Church is a plurality of “*elders*” in every Church (singular) – Why do you think this is? What is the wisdom in this?

**Q4.** What does it mean to be above reproach (Blameless)? – Why is it so important to understand this concept? – What is the difference between being blameless & being perfect? – What does this tell us about the men who are qualified to lead the Church (is it based upon skill or character)? – Should there be a



sense that every member of the Church should be striving for these things? Why or why not?

**Q5.** Why is faithfulness in marriage so important for a Church elder? – What are some other ways people have taken this verse? Why or why not are they correct?

**Q6.** If an elder is accountable to God, how does he also serve people? – How do people benefit if their elders are obedient to God?

**Q7.** Are elders allowed to drink? Is there a limit? Should this limit be higher for elders? – Why are elders held to a different standard to the rest of the Church body?

**Q8.** Why is anger/violence on the list of prohibitions in verse 7?

**Q9.** Why are the positives in verse 8 on that list? – Would you want to add anything to the list in verse 8?

**Q10.** What is the difference between viewing ministry as a profession rather than a calling?

**Q11.** What are the reasons Paul gives for why elders **MUST** be doctrinally sound in the faith/teaching their bibles to others? –

What does it mean to teach & encourage the flock? Does this mean that an elder must be able to preach & hold attention on a Sunday morning? Are there any other contexts where an elder can teach/encourage the flock & refute the wolves?

**Q12.** Do you know elders who love their bible but are **not** good at teaching? – Would they still qualify as an elder according to Paul?

**Q13.** What might a Church become if the elders fail to encourage the flock? – What if they fail to refute?

## **Application Questions**

**[Read Titus 1:5-9]**

**Q1.** How has the sermon this week helped you to reflect on the life & work of your elders? – After reading this text, do you have a greater appreciation for the elders in your Church?

**Q2.** How has your prayer life for your elders been this week? – How can it be improved?

**Q3.** When was the last time you walked up to one of your elders to thank them for all the effort, time, tears, prayers, & work they

put into the Church? – How can we encourage the elders in our Church this week & in the coming Sundays? – Are there any practical ways we can bless our pastors?

Q4. After reading this list – Are there any areas of your life that need to change? – What are the first steps in seeing Gospel change/transformation?

Q5. Are you humble enough to be rebuked – Are you loving enough to give rebuke? – What would these things look like?

Q6. Have you seen or experienced the effects of bad pastors? – What did it lead to?

Q7. Men – What are some ways you can lead your family in devotion to & in accordance with sound doctrine & the Gospel?

Q8. Ladies – How can you lovingly encourage your husband to lead well in the home this week?

Q9. Spend some time praying for your elders & one another.