

INTRODUCTION

1. We are looking again at Paul's Letter to Titus.
2. Paul has just introduced himself in what was a common salutation and now he begins his instruction to Titus.
3. I want to begin this evening by reading verses 5-9 of chapter 1 but we will only look at verses 5-6 tonight.
4. Read Titus 1:5-9.
5. In this section of Scripture we are introduced to leadership in the church.
6. A particular type of leadership that is often ignored in many churches today.
7. The kind of leadership I am referring to is that of elders.
8. The Bible makes it clear that elders are pastors of the church.
9. But what is ignored is that the Bible always mentions more than one in a given church.
10. Elders or pastors lead and oversee the church.
11. They are its shepherds.
12. Acts 20:28 tells us that elders are those which "the Holy Spirit

has made...overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”

13. As we look at verses 5-9 we will see that this section almost completely parallels that of 1 Timothy 3.
14. There are a few more qualifications mentioned here that are not mentioned in 1 Timothy 3.
15. “When Paul left Crete, there were certain things that still needed to be set in order, there were false teachers to be silenced, and there was the pressing need for recognized spiritual guides in the assemblies. He left Titus to handle these matters” (William MacDonald, Believer’s Bible Commentary).
16. So, in chapter one, verse 5 through chapter two, verse 10, Paul addresses 3 areas that Titus is to give attention to:
 - I. The Appointment of Elders (v.5)
 - II. The Qualifications of Elders (vv.6-9)
 - III. The Task of Elders (1:10-2:10)
17. Let’s begin tonight by looking at *The Appointment of Elders* (v.5)

I. The Appointment of Elders (v.5)

A. Titus' Purpose at Crete (v.5a)

Paul gives Titus 3 purposes for being at Crete:

1. To complete what Paul started

He says, "For this reason I left you in Crete."

- a) The word "left" (kataleipo), "implies that the being left behind was temporary rather than permanent" [see 3:12 - Artemas or Tychicus was to replace him] (D. Edmond Hiebert, *Titus*, p.29).

He apparently had help according to 3:13: Zenas the lawyer and Apollos.

- b) "Crete" (krete) was "a large island located in the Mediterranean Sea" (PC Bible Atlas) "Southeast of Greece, Southwest of Asia Minor, and North of Africa" (MacArthur). "It was about 160 miles long and up to 30 miles in width" (PC Bible Atlas). "It was at one time a very prosperous and populous island, having a 'hundred cities'" (Easton's Illustrated Dictionary).

"Crete had long been exposed to Greek and Roman civilization, despite its citizens' reputation for being "liars, evil beasts, [and] lazy

gluttons” (Titus 1:12). Some of the Jews in Jerusalem at Pentecost were from Crete and heard the gospel preached in their own tongue (Acts 2:11). It seems safe to assume that at least some of those who heard were converted, carried the gospel back to Crete, and established fledgling churches in their hometowns. If that is true, there may have been a significant number of Christians on Crete by the time Paul first arrived there” (John MacArthur, *The MacArthur NT Commentary: Titus*).

2. To “set in order what remains”

- a) “set in order” is one word in the Greek (epidiorthoo, aro.mid.subj.). This word is “comprised of two prepositions, epi (“upon”) and dia (“through”), attached to orthoo (“to make straight”) from which we derive the word orthodontist (“a dental specialist who straightens and aligns crooked teeth”) (Ibid., MacArthur, Titus, p.20)

The word was used for “setting broken limbs or straightening crooked ones” (Wuest) and literally means to “set right” (BADG) or “straighten further” (Strong).

“Titus was charged with the task of correcting and setting straight certain doctrines and

practices” (Ibid., MacArthur, Titus, p.20).

Sound doctrine and qualified elders skilled in the Word was a major lack in the churches at Crete — just as it is today!

(1) Doctrines that were preached

- (a) “those of the circumcision...teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain” (1:10-11, NKJV).
- (b) This was “Jewish fables and commandments of men” (1:13, NKJV).

(2) Practices that were observed

- (a) They had a reputation of being “liars, evil beasts, [and] lazy gluttons” (1:12, NKJV)
- (b) They professed “to know God, but in works they [were denying] Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work” (1:16, NKJV)
- (c) Chapter 3:9 reveals they were caught

up in “foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law” (NKJV).

John Calvin notes “Over and above the ordinary pastoral office Titus was charged with the task of organizing the church. Pastors are normally set over churches that are already constituted and brought to some order, but Titus had the additional burden of organizing churches whose affairs were not yet rightly ordered and of giving them a fixed method of government and discipline” (*Titus*, Vol.10, p.356).

- b) “What remains” or “The things that are lacking” (NKJV)

“Remains” (leipo), means “to lack” (Strong), “the things left” (Wuest), “the things remaining” (Rienecker).

The qualifying phrase “what remains” or “the things that are lacking” indicates that “Paul himself, and perhaps others, had accomplished some of the correcting he now wanted Titus to complete. Judging from the admonitions that followed, the problems were both moral and theological and involved church leaders” (Ibid., MacArthur, Titus, p.20).

John Walvoord says, “Titus was now acting as an

apostolic agent (cf. Acts 14:23) in Paul's absence. His authority in the Cretan church was an extension of Paul's own. Such authority ended with the close of the Apostolic Age” (The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Titus).

3. To “Appoint Elders”

- a) “Appoint” (kathistemi) lit. “To set down” (Kittel, Wuest, Hiebert), “to place or put,” “to set over a thing (in charge of it),” “to appoint one to administer an office” (Strong).

- (1) 1 Timothy 4:14 says “Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery” or “eldership.”

“The laying on of hands” came from the OT practice of “laying hands on a sacrificial animal to identify with it (Ex.29:10, 15, 19) [MacArthur Study Bible].

- (a) It was used of the Levites

Numbers 8:9-11 says, “So you shall present the Levites before the tent of meeting. You shall also assemble the

whole congregation of the sons of Israel, 10 and present the Levites before the Lord; and the sons of Israel shall lay their hands on the Levites.

11 "Aaron then shall present the Levites before the Lord as a wave offering from the sons of Israel, that they may qualify to perform the service of the Lord."

(b) It was used of Joshua

Numbers 27:18-23 says, "So the Lord said to Moses, "Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; 19 and have him stand before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and commission him in their sight. 20 "You shall put some of your authority on him, in order that all the congregation of the sons of Israel may obey him. 21 "Moreover, he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before the Lord. At his command they shall go out and at his command they shall come in, both he and the sons of Israel with him, even all the congregation." 22 Moses did

just as the Lord commanded him; and he took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation. 23 Then he laid his hands on him and commissioned him, just as the Lord had spoken through Moses.”

(2) Acts 6:5-6 (the apostles to the seven)

“The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch. 6 And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them.”

(3) Acts 13:2-3 (Paul and Barnabas)

“While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.”

(4) Acts 14:23 (Paul and Barnabas to Lystra, Iconium and to Antioch churches)

“When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.”

(5) 1 Tim.5:22 (Timothy to other godly men)

“Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin.”

b) “Elders” (presbuteros) refers “generally to any older man. But the term already had come to be used as an official title for leaders in the early church (MacArthur).

John Calvin said, “Elders or presbyters were not, as is well know, so called because of their age, for sometimes men still young — like Timothy — were chosen for this office” (Ibid., Titus, p.357).

“As evidenced by the facts that the elders were to be appointed and that they were to have the noblest spiritual character and possess the ability to teach. Simply being older — even older in the faith — does not qualify a man for leadership in the church” (Ibid., MacArthur, p.21).

(1) Elders were gifted men that God placed in

the church

Ephesians 4:8 says when Christ gave gifts to “men” He gave them to the church. He names the gifted men in verse 11: apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers.

- (2) Elders are also referred to by other terms

“The ‘elders’ of the New Testament church were the ‘pastors’ (Eph 4:11), ‘bishops or overseers’ (Acts 20:28), ‘leaders’ and ‘rulers’ (Heb 13:7; 1Th 5:12) of the flock. Everywhere in the New Testament bishop and presbyter are titles given to one and the same officer of the Christian church” (Easton's Illustrated Dictionary).

- (3) Scripture teaches that there are to be a plurality of elders in any given church

(a) Acts 14:23 says, “When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.”

(b) When Paul wrote to the Philippians in Philippians 1:1, he included the “overseers and deacons” in the church

in his greeting.

(4) Elders have a specific function in the church

(a) They oversee the church

1 Timothy 5:17 says, “The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.”

The word “Rule” (proistemi) means, “to stand first” and refers to elders being first in terms of leadership. They have the oversight of the church and are to care for it.

It also means they “rule” or “preside, lead, direct” (Rienecker). This word describes “the duties allotted to all presbyters.”

This find this word or teaching in 1 Thess.5:12-13; Hebrews 13:7, 17, and 1 Pet.5:2-3.

(b) They preach and teach God’s Word

1 Timothy 3:2 says one of their

qualification is that they be “able to teach.”

Ephesians 4:11 refers to them as “pastor-teachers” or “teaching shepherds,” who according to verse 12, equip “the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.”

- (c) They protect the church by exposing and rebuking false teaching

Paul gives Titus one of the qualifications for elders in Titus 1:9 when he says they are to hold “fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.”

Paul told the Ephesians elders in Acts 20:29-31, “I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 "Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a

period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.”

There are many other things they do like baptize new converts (Acts 2:41), labor in the preaching and teaching (1 Tim.5:17), pray over the sick (Jas.5:14-16), oversee the finances of the church (Acts 11:27-30), model righteousness (1 tim.4:12), and ordain other elders to ministry (1 Tim.4:14).

B. Titus' Plan at Crete (v.5b)

“Appoint elders in every city”

The fact that there need to be the appointment of elders in every city indicates “that some of the churches there did not yet have their own qualified local leadership. Because many, if not all, of those churches were troubled by ‘rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision’ (1:10) [Ibid., MacArthur, Titus, pp.20-21].

II. The Qualifications of Elders (vv.6-9)

Warren Wiersbe says, “The fact that these standards applied to Christians on the island of Crete as well as to those in the city of Ephesus proves that God's measure for leaders does not fluctuate. A big-city church and a small-town church both

need godly people in places of leadership” (The Bible Exposition Commentary: Titus).

A. Public Reputation (v.6a)

“Above reproach” (anekletos), means, “irreproachable” (BADG), “without indictment, unchargable” (Rienecker).

“It implies not merely acquittal, but the absence of even a charge or accusation against a person” (W.E. Vine).

Paul uses a different word translated “above reproach” (anepileptos) which literally means, “Not able to be held” (MacArthur) or “not able to be taken hold of, irreproachable, beyond reproach” (Rienecker)

John Calvin says, “He does not mean someone who is free from every fault, for no such a man could ever be found, but one marred by no disgrace that could diminish his authority — he should be a man of unblemished reputation” (Titus, p.358).

“This is a general character qualification stating that he must give no just cause for blame” (D. Edmond Hiebert, 1 Timothy, p.64).

Psalms 101:6 says, “He who walks in a perfect way, He shall serve me.”

John MacArthur says, “God does not call all elders to be

entrepreneurs, men who begin ministries and build them, nor does He call all elders to be producers, men who accomplish a great amount of work in the church, although those are worthy things. Neither does He call all of them to be managers, adept at mobilizing others in the Lord's service, although that, too, is a worthy thing. The Lord does, however, call all elders to be godly leaders, men who by their exemplary lives as well as by their sound teaching and preaching set a pattern of virtue and devotion to the Lord for other believers to follow.

Mistakenly, many church leaders view their roles as that of promoter, businessman, executive, psychologist, entertainer, or president. But those roles contrast sharply with those specified in the New Testament. In 2 Timothy 2 and 3, Paul uses eight different figures to depict the "faithful men" (v. 2) who would carry on the ministry. They were to be able teachers (v. 2), soldiers on active duty (vv. 3–4), athletes who compete according to the rules (v. 5), hardworking farmers (v. 6), careful workmen (v. 15), useful vessels (v. 21), and bond servants (v. 24). None of those images are glamorous or self-aggrandizing. All of them exemplify diligent effort and self-sacrifice. And they are called "man of God" (3:17), a technical Old Testament title for one whose calling is to speak for God.

Godly and effective leadership of the church involves many responsibilities. Among them are winning of the lost to Christ, discipling and nourishing believers, preaching and teaching sound doctrine, organizing, wise

decision making, careful stewardship of funds, consistent and earnest prayer, discipline of sinning members, and ordination of other qualified elders” (Ibid., Titus, p.23).

“A church leaders life must not be marred by sin or vice — be it in an attitude, habit, or incident. That’s not to say that he must be perfect, but there must not be any obvious defect in his character” (*Master’s Thesis*, p.37).

Being above reproach is also the responsibility of all those who follow Jesus Christ.

1. Philippians 2:14-15 says, “Do all things without grumbling or disputing; 15 so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world.”
2. 2 Peter 3:14 says, “Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless.”

B. Sexual Morality (v.6b)

“The husband of one wife”

1. What this means
 - a) “husband” Gr.aner, “man”

b) “wife” Gr.gunaikos, “woman”

“The Greek construction places emphasis on the word ‘one,’ thereby communicating the idea of a ‘one-woman man’” (John MacArthur, *Church Leadership*, p.45).

The “absence of the definite article stresses character not marital circumstances; thus the character of an elder must reflect fidelity to one woman” (Ibid., MacArthur, *Church Leadership*, p.45).

2. What this does not mean

a) It doesn’t mean Paul is prohibiting polygamy

Although polygamy is clearly forbidden in the NT (cf., 1 Cor.7:2), that is not Paul’s point here. Being married to only one spouse at a time applies to all believers, not just church leaders.

b) It doesn’t mean Paul is prohibiting a widower who has remarried

According to Rom.7:1-3; 1 Cor.7:39; 1 Tim.5:14, this practice is perfectly permissible.

c) It doesn’t mean Paul is requiring elders to be married

If that were his point, he simply could have stated such. More significantly, Paul himself may well have been an elder at Antioch before he stepped out into the role of apostle (cf. Acts 13:1), and apparently he was not married (cf. 1 Cor.9:5).

- d) It doesn't mean Paul is referring to divorce

It is possible he is including unbiblical divorce.

3. How it applies

Being “the husband of one wife” refers to the singularity of a man’s faithfulness to the woman who is his wife and implies inner as well as outward sexual purity.

- a) 1 Corinthians 7:2 says, “But because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband.”
- b) 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4 says, “For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor.”

CONCLUSION

1. What is Paul saying in all of this?
2. Paul is telling Titus that the kind of elders that you are to set in place are those whose public reputation is blameless and who are one-woman men.
3. This is the kind of men that are to lead the church.
4. I want to close by reading a portion from a book called *The Reformed Pastor* by Richard Baxter.
5. It would be helpful for every pastor to occasionally read this book which deals with the spiritual reformation and reviving of a pastor's personal life. He writes:

“When your minds are in a holy, heavenly frame, your people are likely to partake of the fruits of it. Your prayers and praises and doctrine will be sweet and heavenly to them. They will likely feel when you have been much with God. That which is most on your hearts is likely to be most in their ears When I let my heart grow cold, my preaching is cold; and when it is confused, my preaching is confused; and so I can often observe also in the best of my hearers that when I have grown cold in preaching, they have grown cold too; and the next prayers I have heard from them have been too much like my preaching

O Brethren, watch therefore over your own hearts; keep out

lusts and passions of worldly inclinations. Keep up the life of faith, of love, of zeal. Be much at home and much with God

....

Take heed to yourselves, lest your example contradict your doctrine, ... lest you unsay with your lives what you say with your tongue s;and be the greatest hinderers of the success of your own labors

One proud, surly, lordly word, one needless contention, one covetous action, may cut the throat of many a sermon, and blast the fruit of all that you have been doing Let your lives condemn sin and persuade men to duty. ([London: Banner of Truth, 1983 ed.], pp. 61– 63, 65).

6. Let's pray.