

Qualifications of a Leader part 2  
Titus 1:7-9

Acts 20:17-36

Ephesians 4:4-24

Responsive Psalm 103:1-10

Last week we talked about some of the requirements for a leader within a church congregation. Must be blameless, a husband of one wife, have orderly, respectful children, and we talked about why these things are important. Not only is how a husband treats his wife and children a reflection of how he will handle the church, marriage is a reflection of our own relationship with God, and one who would be a leader among God's people, should be a reflection of that relationship as well. In verse 7 here Paul applies all of these things to the pastor as well. So these qualifications are for all who would be leaders within the church, the elders, the pastors, the deacons, however a church body decides to split up and label that leadership, they all fall under these requirements that Paul tells Titus to look for.

Today we are going to be looking at a few more of those requirements, but before we start I want to go ahead and read our passage this morning. Again this week we are going to be looking at verses 7-9, but I want to go ahead and read to the end of the chapter starting in verse 5, which will give us a larger picture of the issue that has arisen on these churches in Crete. And as we read this, we will see it is basically the same issue that is found in the other churches as well, division, legalism, false teachers leading people away from the core truth of the gospel message. So, let us read starting in verse 5. (read 5-16)

This week, the focus is upon the pastor, the singular one leader who is the teacher bringing God's word to the people. Different translations use a different term here, mine says bishop, some say overseer, today we would use the term pastor. This is different than the term elder that was used in verse 6, though there is no direct issue of how many of these elders should be appointed, the term Paul uses is plural, where here it is singular. All of those requirements for an elder, likewise apply to the overseer, or pastor, as the word for, in verse 7 links to the previous. Paul says, Go to Crete, visit the churches there and appoint leaders, elders, people who are upright and respected among the people there, who reflect God in their relationships, and likewise appoint pastors who are respected among the people, who are sound in their doctrine, strong in their faith, and dedicated to leading the people in truth.

Paul starts by laying out the things that this Pastor should not be, not self-willed, not quick tempered, not given to wine, nor violent, or greedy for money. As we read these things we think, ya, that sounds pretty simple and makes sense, but sadly there are those who hold such roles who should be disqualified for some of these very listed reasons. We can all probably think of some examples of these, there are pastors, many of them who seek to make a big name for themselves whose mission is to live rich, being greedy for money, using this role for their own personal gain. I have told this story before, but I knew a guy who said he went to seminary, not because he felt a draw to be a pastor or teacher of God's word, he wasn't even a believer, he just saw it as a good career path, work a day or 2 a week and get paid and if you can draw in enough people and convince them to give enough money you can get paid pretty well. Once he found out that it wasn't exactly what he thought it was he dropped out of that, but it has always made me wonder how many have pursued this role for that reason.

His goal and purpose of seeking such a role was completely wrong, focused upon the money, and how easy he believed the so called job would be. But as we know that is not the reality of it, the goal and focus of the pastoral role is to lead the people in spiritual growth and understanding of God's word through teaching, and shepherding the people that God has given them, for as Paul states in verse 7, this particular leader, the pastor, or teacher, is a steward of God. The Greek word used here, is oikonomos (Eekonomos) which means, housekeeper, butler, saver it is the combination of 2 words, house and law. The idea of a steward is one who ruled the household on behalf of the master. In biblical times It was usually a slave, or slaves who have become freemen, although they were slaves at one point, as stewards of the household they have great authority, and responsibility, they would oversee the children's education, the household finance, and manage the other slaves and overarching business of the master. A steward was to run the household on behalf of the owner, answering only to the owner. We see this in the story of Joseph, he was sold by his brothers into slavery in Egypt and ended up becoming the steward not only of a household, but the entire nation. Joseph managed the grain stores and food production throughout a 7 year famine, and because of his management and wisdom not only did Egypt weather the famine, they prospered providing food for all the surrounding regions.

In this context here in Titus, A Pastor is the steward of God's house, the local body is the family of God, but God puts leaders in charge. There is a heavy weight of responsibility in this role, for those who hold it are sort of the face of the church. Right now there is a scandal breaking in a local church right here in Holland, the Pastor was caught in fraud and embezzlement..since the church leaders are not pressing charges he is only facing 24 months probation. But reading the comments on the report this past week, it is things like this which give Christianity as a whole a bad look in the community. I don't know anything about this church, their doctrinal stances, or who they are but the important thing here is a man claiming to be a steward of God's word, and God's people was robbing that congregation.

These are the type of things that should not happen, this is why Paul is putting the emphasis on appointing these leaders, and one of the things he says, is that the bishop, or pastor must not be greedy for money. The accounts I read of people who had attended this church where the Pastor has been exposed in embezzling money, many said they had stopped attending a long time ago because all he taught about was giving money, obsessing over money, obviously falling short of even just one of these requirements set here. He had the trust of the people, a steward of their money, managing the church and he was stealing from them all along. The local church is God's house, and the pastor is the steward, keeping the house until the Master returns. This makes the requirement of being blameless all the more important for he is the face of that local expression of God's church in the society and community around it.

So Paul goes into these specifics of things to look for in this pastor, or steward of God's people, the first thing he lists is he should not be self-willed. These are traits that can be problems within christian leadership that Titus was to look out for as he appointed leaders, and we likewise should be watchful for. The idea of someone who is self-willed is one who is overbearing, or arrogant in his relation to others in the church, or surrounding community. We are all students of God's word, all growing in our understanding and faith, and there is not a single one of us who has everything right, though we strive to as much as we can. A self-willed man, is a know it all, who is unwilling to be challenged, and to grow in his own understanding, seeking his own interests instead of others. Such a

leader is usually controlling, and overbearing, and this is not a personality type that is conducive to the gospel message, nor to what godly leadership should be.

Really, pride is the root of the arrogant and self-willed, unwilling to listen, to learn, and to grow, and instead compensates by control and manipulation. Not only is this an undesirable trait in a pastor, or any leader of a church, it really is the opposite of what a Christian is even called to be, as we are called to be humble and patient, having our hearts and minds open to the word so that we may grow in our faith and knowledge of God, an arrogant filled self-willed person is not open to learning or growing for they believe they already know, they are closed minded and often unreachable.

The next point that Paul makes is that he must not be quick tempered. It would seem often times that the self-will personality, also is one quick to anger and frustration. For if they are ever faced with questions they can not answer, or doubts to their belief and understanding, instead of seeking to grow, they get defensive and aggressive. As James wrote, (1:19) “so then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath, for wrath of a man does not produce the righteousness of God.” The priority of not only a good leader, but a Christian is to first listen, be swift to hear, slow to answer. Letting that answer be thoughtful, edifying, beneficial, with intent to understand and grow. Someone who is quick tempered is inclined toward anger, usually less apt to listen, and more apt to speak. This is not a trait you want in a leader, one who is controlled by their emotions, who is apt to lose his temper when confronted or questioned. Being in control of one's emotions, especially anger is a very important qualification for leadership.

As Proverbs says, (16:32) “He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty. And he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.” An angry leader, someone who is predisposed to angry outbursts and defensive responses is one who feels their goals are more important than everyone else's, again it is a self-willed, self-centered pridefulness focusing upon self instead of others. Unable to listen, unable to hear, dismissing the opinions of others. As a leader, as a steward of God's people, we are to be Christlike in our approach, gentle, calm, yet wise and discerning. There is no place for such a leader within the church, for one who is easily provoked or irritated in this ministry is not an example of a godly character, and as leaders, as pastors, and mentors, as stewards we are to first and foremost be examples to those around us. The mantra of each pastor, should be that of Paul's in his letter to the Corinthian Church, (11:1) “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.” A Christ-centered living creates a confident leadership which is to be imitated as one is to teach and guide others toward living a Christ-centered life as well. It is prioritizing spiritual growth over personal gain.

One good thing I will say about the AI search assistant is the quick summaries it often gives of a bible passage, and it said of this verse in Corinthians 11, that the key aspects of the principle of living a Christ-like life are these. Imitating a Christ-like Behavior; believers are encouraged to follow the example of others but only in as far as those individuals are following Christ. Second, is with Humility and Confidence; a Christ-like life requires living with confidence that you are following Jesus, but having the humility to admit errors and not focus on self. The practical application of this involves reflecting God in daily life, such as in our interactions with one another, with our words, our decisions and avoiding worldly conformity. And lastly, it is the purpose of leadership, to lead others toward Jesus not toward one's self. It isn't about what I believe necessarily, it isn't whether I am right, but it is about

Christ and growing in our faith and understanding..and sometimes that means we question what we think, or what we believe being willing to learn, willing to grow.

A closed minded man, quick to anger will be unable to do any of these things, and is not one who is worthy to be followed, for he does not have control of his emotions, is not living in a Christ-like manner, and brings strife and conflict to the congregation of God's people.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> thing that Paul says here, is that a bishop, or pastor should not be given to wine. Plainly speaker, Pastors of a church should not be alcoholics. This statement here is not a statement of absolute abstinence, but it is about the addiction of, the lack of self control and really this principle can to put toward anything of a detrimental addictive nature. If one who is to be a shepherd to the people does not have control over his own life, over his own desires, how is to the teach and counsel others to do so? Again going back to the basic statement that a Pastor must be blameless. To stand before the congregation and teach out of scripture warning of the dangers of sin, imploring the people to flee from it yet himself is locked into an addiction, is a hypocrisy and undermines his ministry. Such an addiction is not about the item or practice itself, but the relationship toward it. In 1 Timothy Paul writes to Timothy telling him, in chapter 5 verse 23 "Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and frequent illnesses." Yet Timothy was to be a leader to appoint leaders, just as Titus was to do in Crete.

It isn't about the usage, its about the personal responsibility with it, does it control you, does it take over your life. The same thing can be said about coffee, about sports, about video games, about work. The issue is addiction, it just so happens that addiction to alcohol is one of the more common ones that is seen. Leaders who can not control themselves in such away, who are subject to an addiction are not good guides for others to follow, therefor are not good leaders. Paul writes about Christian liberties and freedoms in the book of Romans, and the litmus test he uses there is whether such a practice may cause a weaker brother or sister to stumble. Romans 14:21, "it is good to neither eat meat, nor drink wine, more do anything by which your brother stumbles, or is offended or is made weak." Again going back to the self-willed, self focused person. A leader should be able to set aside himself for the benefit of those he is leading, scripture does not give any hard and fast rules of abstaining from alcohol, but says that if our freedom causes another to stumble, it is sin, for it has lead another who may struggle with such an addiction into that sin.

The self-willed leader says, this is my freedom, and no one will take it from me, he will flaunt his freedom with little care of its effect on others. Where a leader should be thoughtful and mindful of others, of their struggles and be respectful. As an example, if I know that a person I will be dining with has such a struggle with alcohol, I will not offer it to them, nor drink it with them, or around them, though Biblically I have the freedom to do so if it is not sinful for myself, but I am restricted if it causes my fellow believer to stumble into something that he may have a sinful relationship with. A mature believer can, and will set aside such things for the benefit of others, out of care for the other person, because he is not controlled by such things. As it says in Proverbs, 31, "it is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor from princes intoxicating drink. Lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the justice of all the afflicted. There are times and places for all things, and those who are controlled by an addiction are not fit to be leaders, for that addiction could cloud and distort his judgment, could lead others who struggle as well into the same sinful patterns and behaviors.

Paul is demanding here that any who would be appointed a leader, be held to these higher standards, for they are the leaders, living as examples to the people, who are to watch over, care for, the people God has given them. Which leads into the next requirement, Paul says not violent, this comes into play right after the not given to wine I think because often times drunkenness can lead to violence. The concept here though I think goes beyond physical violence, and goes more to the personality and nature of that leader, a leader should not be given to using force to get his own way. A Pastor is a servant of the people, to teach and to guard over not to control and manipulate to accomplish his own desires.

And lastly, it listed, not greedy for money. Financial profit and gain is not the focus of the ministry. When one has such a focus, the gospel is usually set aside to rot, for church growth, and congregational satisfaction becomes the driving force, a happier, larger congregation will indeed give more money leading to more salary for the pastor. Such a pastor is unwilling to say the hard things, is unwilling to preach with conviction in the fears that the people will become uncomfortable, upset, and leave. But, the goal of the Pastor is not to tease out good feelings, and dance around sensitive subjects, he is to teach and preach the truth in the gospel as it is presented in the gospel. Again, we have the face of the pastor in Holland, embezzling from the congregation to the tune of upwards to 100,000 dollars he spent on his own personal things.

Money is one of the great temptations in this life, for it brings power, and can bring a sense of security, and a feeling of peace when it is no longer something that you have to worry if you have enough or not. But this should not be a trait found in a pastor, for his heart should not be upon self gain, but upon the faithful ministry of God's word, the spiritual matters of his congregation. Standing faithful on the word of God, teaching and preaching really stands diametrically opposed to the pursuit of money and success. For the gospel isn't always comfort, it isn't always peaceful, and sometimes it cuts to the heart and convicts. In fact I would say, if you haven't been convicted in church at some point or another you likely should find a new church, because they are not fully and accurately preaching the word of God.

So many want to find a congregation that fits what they feel they want, not what they actually need. And many churches design themselves around the idea of seeking after such people, when in reality all that we are called to do, is to gather together, read God's word, and pray for one another, having a Christ centered, bible centered ministry. What it comes down to in the end, is that any leader who is consumed by any of these negative traits, a leader who is selfish, quick tempered, prone to addictions, or violence, or greed will destroy his ministry, scandal and fallout will happen, and it becomes a black mark not only on that local congregation, but on Christians as a whole as the world watches the catastrophic fall of one who elevates themselves so high.

Next week we will get into the positive traits that one should be looking for in a leader or pastor of a congregation, which counter all of these negative traits, and are actually the polar opposite of those we were looking at this morning. Much of what it all comes down to is trying to discern the motivations of one who would take such a role. And as I was saying last week, you can know much about a person by his own relationship with his wife, with his kids, with his family and very often how he treats and acts around them, is exactly how he will treat the family of God. So these things that Paul is laying out here, these negative traits to avoid, are all things that have the potential to effect the gospel ministry of that congregation, they are things that could potentially harm the people of that church, and

it is a warning to avoid those who would use their position to manipulate and control for their own gain.

Notice in all of these traits, and even as we get into next week in the appointing of these pastors to these churches in Crete, and even in the letter we saw to Timothy for the same thing, there is no requirement for formal education, very little about such qualifications, yet it is so much where congregations focus upon now. Titus, and Timothy were to take men, from the congregations who would fit in the role, judging by these personality traits, not by education and degree. I would argue that these things which we have been looking at, really for the last few months in these couple letters from Paul supersede the requirements that many congregations look for in a Pastor. It matters little of formal education, for Titus himself was not formally educated but was one of Paul's key figures in establishing and maintaining church order.

If all you look for is the education of the individual, you may end up with someone who very well isn't even a believer, but instead is looking for a job with little care about the ministry itself. What you are looking for is one who will serve, who cares for the people, whose heart is hungry for Christ, and whose life reflects those things. So next week, we will look at the positive things to be looking for in one who would be appointed into the role of a pastor, or leader of a congregation.