

Leadership Requirements Part 3
Titus 1:8-9

1 Timothy 4:1-11
2 Timothy 3:1-4:5
Responsive Psalm 110

This morning we are going to be looking at verses 8 and 9 in the first chapter of Titus. Over the past few weeks we have been talking about the requirements for leadership and any who would take up the pastoral role within in a church body that Paul had instructed Titus here in this letter as he was to appoint such leaders to the churches in Crete. So far we have talked about how a leaders family relationships mirror that of his own leadership. Paul wrote that a leader should be blameless, a husband of one wife, and have children who are not disrespectful and rebellious. How a man is with his own family is a reflection of how he will be as a leader in the church.

Then last week we talked about some negative traits that Paul says should be avoided, especially for one who would be taking on the mantle of Pastor, as he must also be blameless, not self-willed, not quick tempered, not given to wine or addictions, not violent nor greedy for money. Many of these thing are acceptable in the world, or in some cases even celebrated. Our society tells us that we are what matters, we are the heroes in our own story and that we should make the world bend to our desires and our needs. We see this in the attitudes of people all around us, in some ways our society has lost the concept of the greater good, no longer caring for anyone other then ourselves. Which stands as the opposite of what we are to be as Christians, as a people who are to model our life after the one who gave his own life for us. We have become a self-will society, and such a trait is not only encouraged it is celebrated, don't let anyone discredit your truth.

We have relegated truth to feeling, reality to emotion, with the final arbiter of truth being ourselves. What We think, what We feel, with little debate or discussion because if there is any disagreement it is an affront to "your truth" I personally despise this term that is tossed around so much today, living your truth, for it implies that the only real truth is what you think, or what you feel, with little regard sometimes for reality, or objective truth. Being self-willed has become one of the pillars of society it would seem, looking out for our own best interests and caring little of others, or in some cases even using others for gain. In many ways I think that this one trait can be a catalyst for all the others, if one is self willed, focused upon what is best for themselves, their glory, their gain, they may tend to be aggressive in that pursuit, quick tempered against those who may speak up to bring truth to the fantasy, a self willed person is a hard headed, stubborn person unwilling to learn, unwilling to grow, and incapable of taking even constructive criticism, for it goes against their truth, what they feel is right. Our society celebrates this, as they also celebrate the lust for money, or live for the drunken weekend.

All of these things are encouraged by our society at large, and none of these things should be reflected in the leadership of a church body. As believers we have been set apart, no longer to walk as we once walked, as John wrote in his little letter, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life-is not of the father but is of the world, and the world is passing away, and the lust of it, but he who does the will of God abides forever."

So that brings us today to the positive traits to look for in a pastor or leader of a church. Let's go ahead and read this morning, starting in verse 5-9. The first thing that Paul lists here out of 6 things, is that a pastor must be hospitable. Really the core of hospitality is caring for one another, if a pastor does not care for the people of the church then there is probably a much larger issue. And likewise that extends to those who would visit as well, a pastor who is closed off and not open and welcoming to people is one who is not being hospitable. How a pastor leads in this is also reflected in the church body, a leader who is reclusive, shut off, and unengaged with the people, will likewise create an unwelcoming environment. We experienced a bit of this when we went up into the UP a few years ago, attending a church there for the morning service. We definitely got the feeling we were "outsiders" as no one greeted us, no one approached us, even as the pastor walked by us the best we got was a side eye glance. Out of a congregation of maybe 60-80 or so people, only one couple approached us and greeted us and talked to us.

Now being the introverts that we are, we were okay with this, but what we took from that experience is the importance of being hospitable, engaged, and not closed off and isolated. And this is all the more important in a smaller church. This likewise goes to the church and her ministry to those who are a part of her. Hospitality isn't just merely entertaining and sharing a meal together, it is the taking care of one another, taking care of the well being of her members on behalf of the church. James wrote, "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this; to visit the orphans and widows in their trouble, and keep oneself unspotted from the world." Caring for the needs of the people in the church, the same principle for a good father, can be applied to the church as well, Jesus speaking of God the father as the good father, said "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him?"

I think this same principle applies here to the church, and plays into the hospitality of the leaders, for a church if she is able should not allow her people to suffer, for what a church as an organization has, is only what has been given, and giving to the community when needs arise, taking care of the people of that church should be a high priority. But likewise we are to be good stewards of what God has given, wise in the handling of the assets and not let our hospitality or charity be taken advantage of. By that I mean, no church has unlimited funds to just give away, so it is important to be good stewards of what we have been given so that we can continue to help when a need arises.

All of this falls under the concept of hospitality, caring for one another, praying for one another, and being friendly and welcoming to those who would visit, and as I said before, it is largely the pastor, and the leaders of the church who sort of set the culture of that congregation, as they are to lead by example, having their own lives reflect these realities in the ministry. The next desirable trait that Paul mentions here in verse 8 is, that the pastor must be "a love of what is good" In the Greek this phrase is actually all one word which is philagathos, derived from philo meaning friend, and agathos which is good. This is someone who is virtuous, who loves what God loves, who seeks out being honest, and right, not deceptive or manipulative. At the very core is the ability to distinguish between what is right and wrong, as Paul wrote to the Philippian church, "whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things

are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy, meditate on these things.
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One who would be such a leader in a congregation needs to be just that, a leader, one who leads by example in their own life. What good is a teacher who does not heed their own words? What good is a teacher who doesn't grow and learn and apply their own lessons to their own life? Such a teacher would be a hypocrite, and not worthy of following. As believers we are to be as Paul wrote in Philippians, we are to be pursuers of the things that are noble, the things that are right, the things that are just and pure. In many ways even more so for anyone who would be a leader, for not only are they an example to the people, they are the ones who set the culture, a corrupt leader creates a corrupt church, a hypocritical leader, creates a hypocritical church, a judgmental, controlling, money obsessed leader, creates the same within the church, a law minded legalistic leader, creates a law minded legalistic church. So all of these are important when considering a leader, as Titus was to do in the churches in Crete. A Philagothos, is a loving friend, a good friend, someone who cares truly for the people, whose heart is to bring the gospel, to encourage, and yes even rebuke at times, but does so because of love and concern for the individual, or people.

Seeking what is best for one another as much as one can, caring for the needs, ministering and facilitating spiritual growth and maturity. Standing up for what is just, what is right, in pursuit of Godliness through Christ. Which brings us to the next requirement, Paul says such a leader must also be “sober minded” which gives us another a few more Greek words this morning, *sophron* meaning, being vigilant, calm, and free from intoxication of irrationality. The related verb, *sophroneo*, means to be in one's right mind, to be temperate, to exercise control. This is one not given to addiction, not given to anger, not one who lusts for power and control. A leader who is prudent in his judgments, who is stable in their own faith and belief that does not fall trap to the sins which often tempt us. The opposite of this is someone who is obsessed, who is controlled by their desires, who is unstable, bouncing from one thing to the next. As one commentator said, A pastor must be temperate and sensible in the eyes of the congregation. The idea here of sober, is not solemnness, but the ability to think in a balanced way.

Someone who is not given to extremes, who is not caught up in fads, or moments, chasing the next big thing, but rather is stable in their belief, and focused upon Christ. As the years keep going by it seems in our society stability is a dying trait, as our attention spans get shorter, as we chase the next high, the next big thing, there is little care or regard for truth, or evidence, and we become more and more irrational, driven by emotion, driven to anger and frustration...but in the presence of God there is to be peace, wisdom, strength, and above all, truth. As I mentioned already this morning truth has been relegated to our feelings in our society today, facts don't matter, reality doesn't matter, only what you feel matters. A sober-minded leader will not be tossed to and fro by the changing tides of emotional manipulation, will instead be focused upon seeking truth, being rational, and in control of their own thoughts and feelings, not being controlled by them.

An example of this that came to mind was a few of the candidates that we had when we were going through our pastoral search. A few seemed to be rather nice people, but would not have fit in with us doctrinally, but instead of seeing us as fellow believers, they began to see us as a people who needed fixing and being corrected and when confronted with some of those differences they became angry, or even downright forceful. These are not sober-minded individuals in control of their own emotions, in some there was definitely signs of arrogance with an attitude of “when I am your pastor I

will fix you” This really isn’t the kind of leader any church body should want, I am sure that even when Timothy, or Titus went into a church with the intent of bringing them back on course, they did not do so with such arrogance, but rather through a pursuit of what is right, and what is good, teaching and preaching with patience and care for the people.

Next Paul lists Just as a prerequisite, a Pastor must be upright in his personal conduct and dealings with people. Again, a Pastor should practice as he preaches, committing himself to what is right, what is just and next is holy, which is similar, for an unjust person is not a holy person, and likewise a holy person is a just person. Holy means, someone who is pure, who is clean, and devout. When you are looking for someone to be a leader of a congregation of people the first and foremost requirement is that they truly be a believer, as much as we are able to determine. This concept here portrays the idea of a devotion to Christ, someone who pursues righteousness, and holiness, by pursuing Christ in their own daily walk. Just like blameless is sort of a blanket statement that covers many of these things, so is holy, for if one strives to be holy, they should be many of the other things as well. To be holy, means to be set apart, God set Israel apart from the nations, he made them his holy nation, to reflect his goodness, and his mercy. Though they rebelled, though they sinned, and rejected the messiah, they are still referenced as being set apart for God, for the nation of Israel, was a shadow, a picture of God’s people in Christ.

God has set us apart, as his holy people, separate from the world, though we are in the world, we are not of the world, we are of Christ. Holiness is following Christ, holiness is focusing ones heart and mind upon our savior, on seeking him, and living a life in pursuit to know him more and to grow in our understanding and faith. It is a turning away from the lusts and temptations of this world, and having our desires fulfilled in Christ, a life lived in devotion to him. This should be everyone who calls upon the name of Christ, but Paul is saying here to be sure that the one who you would appoint as your teacher, and leader, exemplifies these things.

And lastly listed here is self-controlled. This is not unlike sober minded, this is someone who is in control of ones emotions, who is self disciplined, who is accountable to his actions and words. But there is a balance to be found in this, for some can go to far and take this concept into legalism, while others go to far the other way and have little to no discipline, under the idea of freedom. I have often said, that is most things in life the correct answer is down the middle, and that is the case here, one must be disciplined in their actions, in their life, and in their words, but it should not lead to legalism and control. An undisciplined leader, does not have the right to oversee the lives of others, for he doesn’t have his own life in control, he lacks integrity, and emotional stability to help and guide others who may need it. The standard the is set for a pastor, is a high standard, as a leader, as one who is to be an example to the people, as one who the people are to be able to approach for direction, advice, and help it is important that he be one of integrity, sober-minded, self-controlled, patient and hospitable, who pursues what is just, what is good, and what is holy.

And lastly verse 9, “holding fast to the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.” There must also be a commitment to the word of God. Far to often today we see pastor’s who barely even use the bible in their message, other then a proof text here and there to push a preconceived point that they want to focus on. A pastor must be grounded in the word of God, and his message must come from the word of God. This time that we have to teach and to preach is not for airing personal pet peeves, or grievance. It is not a time of

political grand standing, nor should it be used to fleece money out of the people. It is a time for teaching God's word so that we learn and grow, so that we know God more, and through the teaching of the word comes the power of salvation, the power to win our fight against sin, and the knowledge of peace through hardship as we learn to love God more, and we learn to trust him more. Sound doctrine, and bible based teaching is the cornerstone of a Pastoral ministry. We saw this as we went through the letters that Paul wrote to Timothy, the constant challenge to remain true to the word, to be gospel minded, and to defend the truth of scripture against the false teachers.

And again, really, this goes out to all believers as well, as we are all ministers of the gospel of Christ. It isn't just important for the pastor to be committed to the word of God, but each and every Christian must be. In this verse, Paul says about teachers, that they should be committed to the faithful word of God, but he also says according to how they have been taught. In the context here it is how they have been taught from the Apostles, but this applies to me as a pastor, to you as fellow ministers of God's word, focusing on the importance of sound doctrine, belief, and practice. In this faith we are to be constantly growing, constantly learning, and striving to be closer and closer to God. If you ask aged pastor who has been a pastor for a long time, he will tell you he still learns, he still grows, it is a never ending process and reality of this faith. And it is what we strive to do together as a community, as we live our lives out together before the Lord. One Pastor said this, "Christianity is a system of the written word. God formed its truths into clear propositions. Leadership in the local church does not rest on the charisma of the pastor. Neither does it reside on his education, or natural ability. It reposes upon the Word of God. The bible must be woven into the very fabric of the church."

Failure to hold fast to the word of God is the cause of the superficial evangelicalism we see today, we have a generation of frail Christians, and misguided lost sheep because the church is more concerned about numbers than truth. It is better to be small, and mighty in God's word, then to be big and flashy, but spiritually weak, or empty. Next week as we get into the last half of this chapter we will talk more as to why these things are important, for there are forces which are out to cause us harm, and desire our failure, and these things are the best way we have to defend ourselves against them. Truth of scripture exposes, and destroys the false teachers, the teaching and preaching of God's word creates true belief, not a surface zombie like faith. To be a vibrant church, we must be a word focused, people who are hungry for the knowledge and faith to know God more.