

Series: Salt and Light: God's Vision for the Church

Sermon: The Leadership of the Church

Scripture: Titus 1 (ESV)

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"God believes leadership of the local church is so important that He addresses the issue in detail 4 times in the New Testament: Acts 20:28-38, 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-4. Emphasis in each list falls on a leader's personal character and theological competency. God is primarily interested in *who you are* and then *what you do*."

o Daniel A. Akin, **Christ-Centered Exposition, Titus**

"Titus is the most enigmatic figure in early Christian history."

o Sir William Ramsay (Christian archeologist)

Titus 1 (ESV)

1 Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness,

2 in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began

3 and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior;

4 To Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

5 This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you—

6 if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination.

7 For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain,

8 but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined.

9 He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

10 For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party.

11 They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach.

12 One of the Cretans, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons."

13 This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith,

14 not devoting themselves to Jewish myths and the commands of people who turn away from the truth.

15 To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but both their minds and their consciences are defiled.

16 They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work.

1. Healthy churches are led by godly leaders. (v. 5-8)

What's true of a godly leader?

First, he is "above reproach" -- meaning: blameless - Greek: *Anenkletos*. Does not mean "without blemish" but rather "without blame" or "unaccused" -- a blameless reputation

- A faithful man in his home.
 - As a husband
 - As a father
 - "We are not necessarily looking at the beliefs and actions of one child but at the character of the family as a whole...our assessment is to be based on observations of children's conduct and convictions made over time, not on isolated statements or actions." - Bryan Chapell
- A faithful man in his character.
 - Not arrogant
 - Not quick-tempered
 - Not a drunkard
 - Not violent
 - Not greedy for gain
 - Hospitable ("loving strangers")
 - Lover of good
 - Self-controlled (Sensible, of sound mind)
 - Upright (fair, performing one's duty to man)
 - Holy (performing one's duty to God)
 - Disciplined (possessing the strength through the Holy Spirit to master and curb one's sinful drives and impulses)

2. Healthy churches are led by godly leaders who hold fast to the Word of God. (v. 9)

3. Healthy Churches are led by godly leaders who refute unsound doctrine. (v. 10-16)

The office of eldership is given in Scripture to provide spiritual nurture and protection for the church. Elders are to shepherd the flock of Jesus Christ through the faithful ministry of the Word and are to lead by godly example.

"Take heed to yourselves, lest your example contradict your doctrine...lest you unsay with your lives what you say with your tongues; and be the greatest hinderers of the success of your own labors." - Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor*

"We need leaders in the church who will set aside their preferences for the purpose of maintaining the unity in truth and love. We need elders who will sacrifice their individual priorities for the sake of the congregations. We need men who will labor both to understand their brothers and carefully heed the Scriptures rather than stake out an uninformed position and remain unwilling to learn. We need men who love God and the church more than themselves."

- Phil Newton and Matt Schmucker, *Elders in the Life of the Church*