

Choosing Lieutenants

June 18, 2017 ~ Titus 1.5-9

Part 2 of 7-Part Series

- ❖ Last week we gave background on Titus, **letter to Titus**, and Crete
- ❖ **v5** was included last week – but we'll cover it again briefly today
- ❖ Part 1 was "**Following Orders**" (Paul told Titus to do 2 things in Crete)
 1. "**set in order the things that are lacking**"
 - ◇ 5 specifics were shared: rebuke deceivers, teach duty and character, model good works, deal with divisive people
 2. "**appoint elders in every city**"
 - ◇ Appointment was not unilateral action by Titus
 - ◇ Classical Greek denotes "**elect by raising of hands**"
 - ◇ Titus was to ensure elders were appointed by a process he knew
- ❖ The word "**ordain**" has "**to put in order**" at its root

"Elders" in the Bible

- ❖ Old Testament uses term for Egyptians, Moabites, and Israelites
 - ◇ **Gen 50.7** ~ "So Joseph went up to bury his father; and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt..."
 - ◇ **Num 22.7** ~ "So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the diviner's fee in their hand, and they came to Balaam and spoke to him the words of Balak."
 - ◇ **Ex 4.29** ~ "Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel."
- ❖ Old Testament / All, Some, Seventy elders of Israel in most significant events
 - ◇ "all" ~ **Ex 4.29, 12.21, 18.12**
 - ◇ "some" ~ **Ex 17.5, Jer 19.1**
 - ◇ "seventy" ~ **Ex 24.1, 24.9, Num 11.16, Eze 8.11** (*Sanhedrin – great council*)
 - ◇ "elders of ..." ~ cities and towns (throughout remainder of OT)
 - ◇ OT prophets / NT gospels present "elders of Israel" in negative light
- ❖ New Testament / Gospels, Acts (2 defs), Epistles, Revelation
 - ◇ Gospels ~ "elders, chief priests and scribes"
 - ◇ **Acts 4-6, 22-25** ~ 9 references to Jewish elders (5 and 4)
 - ◇ **Acts 11-21** ~ 10 references to Christian elders
 - ◇ **1 Tim to 1 Peter** ~ 7 references to Christian elders
 - ◇ **Revelation** ~ 12 references to "twenty-four elders"

Xition: Let's look briefly at the elders in action in Acts

“Elders” in Acts

- ❖ **Read Acts 11.27-30** ~ “Now in these days .. Barnabas and Saul.”
 - ✧ The elders had a role in managing money and famine relief
- ❖ **Read Acts 15.1-4** ~ “But some men came .. had done with them.”
 - ✧ This is regarded as the seminal General Assembly of the Christian Church
 - ✧ They were welcomed by 1) church, 2) apostles, and 3) elders
 - ✧ Paul and Barnabas gave a missions report c/ministry to Gentiles
- ❖ **Read Acts 15.5-7a** ~ “But some believer who .. had been much debate”
 - ✧ Note that only the “apostles and the elders” gathered to debate
 - ✧ Peter, Paul, Barnabas, then James speak (**vss 7-21**)
 - ✧ They craft letter and send Paul, Barnabas, Judas and Silas to Antioch
 - ✧ Antioch had large Gentile population / Jerusalem still Jewish
- ❖ **Read Acts 16.1-5** ~ “Then he came to .. increased in number daily.”
 - ✧ Elders involved in decision-making for affiliated churches
- ❖ **Read Acts 20.17-18a** ~ “From Miletus he sent .. he said to them”
 - ✧ The elders are representatives of the entire Church (*just as 70 in OT*)
- ❖ **Read Acts 20.27-30** ~ “I have not shunned .. the disciples after themselves”
 - ✧ “Take heed to .. flock .. Holy Spirit has made you overseers ..to shepherd”
 - ✧ “from among yourselves men will rise up .. watch and remember”
 - ✧ It’s the Holy Spirit that made these men elders or overseers
 - ✧ Elders managed money, ministries, doctrine, and souls
 - ◆ Bad elders would arise / Elders must hold other elders accountable

v6 ~ Summary Qualifications of an Elder

- ❖ “**man**” / “**blameless**” / “**married**” / “**to one woman**” / “**faithful children**”
- ❖ Elders are:
 - ✧ Male ~ Not all churches practice this today
 - ✧ Blameless ~ Not sinless, but highly regarded / “**above reproach**”
 - ✧ Married ~ Must be married and faithful (“*one woman man*”)
 - ✧ Father ~ Must be an experienced & successful father

v7a ~ An Elder Must be Above Reproach as God’s Steward

- ❖ That an elder must be “**above reproach**” is repeated
- ❖ But a reason is given – He serves as a steward of God’s house / “**trust**”

Xition: An elder must not . . .

v7b ~ An Elder Must NOT be (alternative renderings from NIV or ESV)

- ❖ “self-willed” / “arrogant”
 - ✧ Not surprised this is first trait / Elders must work “with” people
 - ◆ Arrogance ~ “I alone am right – you must do it my way”
 - ◆ Self-willed ~ “To confuse your own desires for God’s”
 - ✧ An elder must relinquish his own desire at times
 - ✧ Paul was strong-willed, not self-willed / God changed his plans
- ❖ “quick-tempered”
 - ✧ Neg ~ When pride is attacked or hurt a man can lash out causing great harm
 - ✧ Pos ~ Also can resort to anger / bluster when reasonably challenged
- ❖ “given to wine” / “drunkard”
 - ✧ Dulls sense of reason / Decreases inhibitions / Must be careful
 - ✧ Alcohol and drugs offer an escape from reality / Short-lived
 - ✧ Elders must bear up under pressures of life / Not give in to them
- ❖ “violent”
 - ✧ Related to temper, but also loss of inhibitions
 - ✧ People can fight to get their way / But also to destroy without reason
 - ✧ **James 1.19-20** ~ “So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; 20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”
- ❖ “greedy for money” / “greedy for gain”
 - ✧ Power / Influence / Celebrity / Wealth
 - ◆ The world lusts after these without shame or apology
 - ◆ Good Christians are often undermined by love of them

v8 ~ But Instead Must BE

- ❖ “hospitable”
 - ✧ More than having guests over / Serve others sacrificially / Help in crisis
- ❖ “lover of what is good”
 - ✧ When you love something you sacrifice for it
 - ◆ Some men love fishing / hunting - spend time and \$ on them
 - ✧ Something doesn’t have to be totally evil to not be good
 - ✧ God likes understatement / He likes the word “good”
 - ◆ “Good” summed up work of creation
 - ◆ Jesus rejected appellation “good” with “rich young ruler”

- ❖ “sober-minded” / “self-controlled”
 - ✧ Must see truth of matters / Not willing to “look the other way”
 - ✧ Must act from will after thinking / not from impulse or emotion
- ❖ “just” / “upright”
 - ✧ Must know what’s right and then do what’s right
 - ◇ Ignorance of God’s Word is no excuse
 - ◇ Refusal to obey (and teaching others such) is worse
 - ✧ Many elders throughout time will answer for failure to act justly
- ❖ “holy”
 - ✧ A man may be considered “blameless” yet be secular
 - ✧ To be holy is to be reverent
 - ✧ It’s not to take ourselves seriously ~ but to take God seriously
- ❖ “self-controlled” / “disciplined”
 - ✧ The overarching trait required is “blameless”
 - ✧ A man remains “blameless” by exercising “self-control”
 - ✧ Authority and power tends to change people for the worse
 - ◇ Saul was a man of low reputation ~ He became a tyrant

v9a ~ “holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught”

- ❖ A word we could use to describe this is “tradition”
 - ✧ But for many Protestants “tradition” is a very bad word
- ❖ We Protestants have a reputation of rebelliousness
 - ✧ Roman Catholics regard Protestants as the North did the South
 - ◇ “**Secessionists**” ~ Spoken in tone of contempt
- ❖ But Luther, Calvin, and other reformers broke with an arrogant Church
 - ✧ The Protestants chose to remain true to God ~ not an errant Church
- ❖ Very bright theologians sometimes despise rank and file pastors / teachers
 - ✧ **III: Auburn Ave** ~ Very bright men / But some with arrogant words
 - ✧ Gary North alluded to such in his “**Tools of Dominion**” (accused of pride)
 - ◇ “In the multitude of words sin is not lacking” **Prov 10.19**
 - ✧ “Dead flies putrefy the perfumer’s ointment, And cause it to give off a foul odor; So does a little folly to one respected for wisdom and honor.” **Ecc 10.1**

Xition: An elder must be prepared to exhort and convict . . .

v9b ~ “that he may be able to .. those who contradict”

❖ “exhort by sound doctrine”

✧ An elder must encourage good behavior

❖ “convict by sound doctrine”

✧ An elder must discourage bad behavior

❖ This implies that the man

✧ Knows sound doctrine / Can distinguish truth from error

✧ Courageous in the application of it

Paul left Titus behind in Crete to establish leadership

He needed men of integrity who would serve God / Not themselves

Elders are imperfect men / “It’s not about perfection, it’s about direction”

1. Are they dedicated to learning God’s Word?

2. Are they dedicated to applying God’s Word?

3. Will they crucify their own desires to serve God & His Church?

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,

And to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

To God our Savior, who alone is wise,

Be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever.

Amen *pause* Go in peace . . .