Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Qualifications for a Pastor, Part 2: Noble Character, Part 2
Scripture: Titus 1:7-8
Code: 56-8

Well I think by now you're probably fairly well aware of the fact that in my own personal life, as I prepare for the messages in Titus, the Lord is working on me. Preaching on the qualifications for a pastor, of course, is a very challenging thing because I'm always in the process of examining my own heart, my own life. And what I say to you out of the Word of God is a standard that is very high, a standard to which the Lord calls me and any other servant, and yet a standard which we cannot fully attain in this life and only in some measure can attain by the goodness of God, the grace of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit.

We're looking at Titus chapter 1, verses 5 through 9 - the required character for a pastor. And before we come to the Lord's Table I do want to finish what I started to say last week.

Every pastor should occasionally reread Richard Baxter's classic book entitled *The Reformed Pastor*, “Reformed” not being a label for a kind of theology, but “Reformed” having to do with reforming his own life, reviving his own life, restoring his own spiritual life. He wrote the book in 1656, but it speaks to my own heart whenever I have the opportunity to reread it, as I frequently do. Let me share a few paragraphs from this work. He's writing, remember, to pastors. "When your minds are in a holy, heavenly frame, your people are likely to partake of the fruit 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 like 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 oft 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 and worldly inclinations. Keep up the life of faith and love and zeal. Be much at home and be much with God. 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. 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."

Some very important exhortations to one who serves, and a reminder that no sermon is greater than the life behind it. The spiritual qualifications for leadership in the church are non- negotiable. I am convinced that they are in part what determines whether a man is indeed called by God to the ministry. For a man in whom these qualifications do not exist - these graces do not reside - is a man who is unsuited to ministry, therefore he may never have been called in the first place. Bible colleges, Christian colleges, seminaries can help equip a man for ministry. Church boards and pulpit committees can offer him opportunity for ministry. But the call for ministry comes from God and is attended by a certain kind of life that only God can produce. Those whom God calls to be pastors and elders in His church will meet these requirements because God will see to it that they do, and then they are challenged to continue to maintain these requirements in the power of the Spirit.

The requirements for someone who is a pastor or an elder are carefully laid out in Scripture and summarized most aptly in 1 Timothy 3, verse 1 and following, and right here in Titus chapter 1, verses 6 through 9.

Just by way of reminder, let's look at verse 6, and let me read these following verses: a man who is to be an elder must be “above reproach, the husband of one wife [or better, ‘a one-woman man’], having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, devout, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict."

The key here is in verse 6 and 7, the phrase "he must be above reproach." That is a general statement. There is nothing in his life for which he bears a reproach. There is nothing in his life for which he should be laid hold of and accused justly, indicted, and found to be guilty. No area of his life has in it a scandalous sin. In fact, there is no ongoing sin in any area of his life that is not being continually dealt with before the Lord and has not brought any reproach upon him or the name of Christ.

That “above reproach” life falls into four categories, and we've been looking at these. The first one is sexual morality, that is in the statement "the husband of one wife,” or “a one-woman man," and speaks not about his marital status as such but about his moral life, that he is totally and completely devoted in mind and body to the woman who is his wife. He is a moral man in that area.

Secondly, we said the category also of great importance in verse 6 is family leadership. He demonstrates his leadership in the home by “having children who believe, not being accused of dissipation or rebellion.”

Down in verse 9 you have another of the categories, and that has to do with his teaching skill. He is to be able to hold fast to “the faithful word” and the teaching and with it “exhort with sound doctrine and refute those who contradict.”

So sexual morality, family leadership, and teaching skill are three of the four categories. The other one, the one to which we look in verses 7 and 8, is that of his general character, his general character. And his character also must “be above reproach” and impeccable. And what Paul gives us here in verses 7 and 8 falls into two categories: verse 7, what a pastor must not be; and verse 8, what a pastor must be. They are simple, straightforward characteristics.

First of all, let's look at verse 7 and pick up where we left off, what a pastor must not be. “For the overseer” - elder, pastor – “must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed.” That's the first one. That is to say, he's not in love with himself to the point where he is stubborn and arrogant. We saw that last time.

Secondly, “not quick-tempered.” That has the idea of having a temper that bursts forth periodically. Sort of a long-lasting, nurtured anger under the surface that bursts out when he is somehow thwarted in his efforts, or when somehow he is withstood in his desires when he doesn't get what he wants one way or another. It shows up in hostility and anger. That kind of man is banned from the pastorate.

And then we stopped last time with the third one, “not addicted to wine,” which translates the Greek word *paroinos*, literally having the idea the word *oinos* is a word for “wine”; *para,* “to be alongside” wine. This requirement, by the way, is also given in 1 Timothy 3:3. There it says basically the same thing – “not being alongside wine.” You'll notice in chapter 2 of Titus, verse 3, older women are not to be “enslaved to much wine.” Back in 1 Timothy it talks about deacons not being given “to much wine” as well. So we find that not only those in leadership but even those in the church as such, indicated by these “older women” in Titus chapter 2, are not to be the kind of people who are associated with wine.

Now what does he mean by this? Well it's important for us to understand it. We could broaden our concept a little bit if we remember that in 1 Timothy 3 we also have another requirement which is the word “temperate,” *nphalios*. It originally meant that he was “to abstain from wine.” A temperate person was an abstainer from wine. It came metaphorically to mean “circumspect, alert, or clear-headed.” But the idea is the same. Anybody in spiritual leadership is to be clear-headed. So never is he to be given over to anything that dulls the clarity of his mind. Pastors, elders, are to be in control of their senses at all times.

Now people always ask, Does this mean that they never drank any wine at all? And the answer to the question is, no, it doesn't mean that. They did drink wine in ancient times. Wine was the common drink. To be clear about it, and I'll try to summarize what I've written at great length in my Ephesians commentary on this issue, you couldn't drink the water without running some kind of risk. Even today in third-world countries the first thing they tell you when you get off the plane is "Don't drink the water." Water has the capability to nurture certain things that can infect your body - bacteria, etc. And so, generally speaking, water needs to be purified, and that was true in ancient times as well.

As a result of that, unless it was a clear, running stream somewhere, any kind of standing water would be potentially a health hazard. They drank the fruit of various kinds of, I should say the juice of various kinds of fruit. It might be a citrus fruit; it might be something like a pear or an apple; very commonly it was grapes. The common drink came from these fruits.

Now to put that in perspective, you need to understand there was no refrigeration. There was no refrigeration, and so any kind of juice standing in the heat of the Middle East, of course, would ferment. And even a new wine, *gleukos* as the Greek word indicates, would ferment rather rapidly. Though it was sweet at the start, it wouldn't take long for it to turn. Because of that, they took a number of precautions, the first of which was to mix the wine with water, as much as eight parts of water to one part of wine. This, of course, acted almost as a disinfectant for the water, rather than a drinking of wine, because mixed eight to one there wasn't much there. But the fermented wine with its disinfectant capability would purify the water, and so the water would be then more drinkable and less potentially harmful.

The second thing that they did was to boil it. They would take the wine that had fermented and they went through a boiling process. This kind of wine probably comes from the Hebrew word, or is associated with the Hebrew word *yayin*, which basically refers to wine in the Old Testament but has the concept in the very word itself of “bubbling up.” It's not the bubbling of the bubbly in the wine; it's the bubbling of the boiling process. And what they did was simply boil down the wine, which

evaporated all of the alcohol content and evaporated all of the liquid, and they ended up with a paste, a thick paste, which by the way they would even spread on bread to use like a jam as we do today. Now this thick paste could be contained in skins and kept that way, and at some point in time as a thick syrup could be squeezed out and remixed in its concentrated form with water and at that point would not have the property to ferment. So that kind of wine from paste mixed with water would be non-alcoholic - wouldn't have any alcohol content. The other kind, as I mentioned, would be that which was mixed with water, the alcohol content being diluted significantly so that you couldn't get drunk on it because your stomach couldn't hold what it would take to get you drunk because there was so much water mixed with it. So they took some serious precautions.

Now wine today is not like that. Wine today comes straight out of the fruit, particularly the grapes as most wine comes from that, and as it comes it is purposely fermented. It is, that's the whole point of it, to make it somehow intoxicating to one level or another. And it is consumed that way. To mix wine with water would be a cardinal sin today. Anybody who is into wine would tell you that. That's what I've been told; I certainly don't know it first-hand. But that's not what is done, and today you don't make wine out of concentrate; you make orange juice and grape juice in your kitchen out of it because you buy the little concentrated stuff and you mix it and that's what we do today. But the kind of wine that we call wine today - rather than grape juice or fruit juice - the kind of wine that we have today is not the same as the kind that would normally be consumed in biblical times.

So what then does it mean here when it says this person is to be *m paroinos*? – “not, not alongside wine.” It really does mean, I think, what the NAS has translated, "not addicted to it." *Para* means “to be alongside” – “not someone who is always alongside the wine, not someone who hangs around the wine.” And the intent of that concept here is a person who has some kind of addiction to this or some kind of need to indulge himself in this - to some degree of incapacitation, I'll put it that way. He's not just drinking the mixed wine for the sake of quenching thirst. Now remember, the climate in Israel is very much like Southern California. In fact, they're almost identical parallels. And it's hot and it's very dry there; it's an arid or semi-arid area. And there was great amount of fluid needed because the body would lose its fluid. They didn't have air conditioning for the homes or anything like that, as you would well know, and consequently they put in a lot of fluids to just maintain their fluid level in their body. And it would be easy if they were drinking actual fermented wine to - all of them would be inebriated all of the time, particularly in the summer. And so they would normally have this mixture, and they would use it for the quenching of thirst, or they would use this concentrate which couldn't ferment then when mixed with water, and they would drink that.

In either case the idea was to quench thirst and to provide some refreshment and enjoyment without bringing about some intoxication. Quite the contrary to what people use wine for today, which is

somehow to one degree or another to make them feel a little bit abnormal.

Now he says basically here that anybody who is a spiritual leader can't be involved in any of this kind of behavior, any kind of addiction to wine, any kind of coming alongside wine, any lingering around wine. The implication being you're hanging around it, you're not just drinking it for the sake of quenching your thirst or the sake of the refreshment of it. You're hanging around it, you're alongside of it, it's a major part of your life, and it has some impact on your thinking. The idea could be one who is a drinker, one who goes to the feast and hangs around the wine, one who goes to the tavern or the inn or the bar - places associated with drinking where there is potential for drunkenness, where there's potential for indiscretion, where there is a potential for losing control of yourself to the degree that you say things or do things that are inappropriate, where there is obviously the association with those who are drunkards and those who are sinners. Everybody knows that taverns and inns and bars, things like that in ancient times, were places of debauchery and iniquity. No man who has any of that kind of stuff in his life is fit to be a pastor or an elder.

And when you bring that down into today's world, it's still true. People who frequent bars, who drink as a normal course intoxicating beverages, who hang around - you know, the idea would be drink your wine and leave, don't hang around and hang around and keep drinking and keep drinking until you finally have inebriated yourself. Anybody who is at all involved in that kind of thing is unfit for ministry.

But to take it a step further. I think it is safe to say in the early church that the people who knew the Lord for the most part would drink the mixed wine with water, and the boiled and syrupy paste kind of reconstituted with water and not even deal with strong drink, which was a term for that which was unmixed at all. So they did everything they could to stay free of any intoxicating level of imbibing.

Now when you look at today, we have so many other opportunities that it isn't even necessary to get anywhere near alcoholic beverages. We have so many other things; with refrigeration we can preserve every imaginable kind of thing and not have to worry about its fermentation. So as elders here at Grace Church and pastors through all the years that I've been here, we have all affirmed a total abstinence position and said none of us will ever drink any alcoholic beverage, any time, under any circumstance. It's not necessary. And because the kinds of alcoholic beverages that we have today are not reconstituted, non-alcoholic, nor are they mixed with water sufficiently to dilute their force, we abstain from all of that. That's been our position. It's not necessary to drink that today, so why would we do it?

Another perspective is simply this: it tends to be potentially damaging to those who follow us. You understand that? Paul says in 1 Corinthians chapter 8, Romans chapter 14, I don't want to do anything that's going to cause another believer to stumble. And you can believe one thing for sure, that if people knew John MacArthur drank wine, they would say, "Well certainly, if he does it we can do it." And some of those people who say “because he does it I can do it” may end up being irresponsible, out of control, and, who knows, may even become alcoholics. So I don't ever want to be in a position of setting a standard that's going to cause another brother to stumble, to fall into iniquity. And so Paul says “if I, if I eat meat and it makes my brother offend, I won't eat meat. And if I drink a certain thing and it offends somebody, I won't drink.”

And then there are those weaker brothers - also an issue in those same texts - who would be offended by that, and so we have taken the position that is something we do not do at all. Now there may be occasions when you're in a third-world country somewhere, and you're having a communion service and they serve real wine, that you may take a bit of it there because that's the necessary thing to do in that environment. That would be the exception, obviously.

But what Paul is saying is no man who is at all irresponsible with regard to those things, which can potentiate drunkenness, has any business being in spiritual leadership. Now let me elevate this thing a little bit more. In Leviticus chapter 10 and verse 9 it was instructed that Aaron and all the high priests stay away from any alcoholic beverages. In Proverbs chapter 31, verses 4 and 5, we are told explicitly that alcoholic beverages were not for kings and not for princes or rulers. The point being this: anybody who is a priest, anybody who is a king, anybody who is a ruler is in a position where they are making very significant decisions that have implications for a wide range of people, and they don't want to be operating without full comprehension. I'm confident that doesn't happen in our government, very confident. One can only wonder what goes on after they have done things at the end of a long luncheon, in which they have imbibed and come up with some of the things that they come up with.

Aaron and the high priests - the kings, the princes, the rulers - were to abstain from anything that could in any way dull their senses. And then there was that very wonderful and unique vow in the Old Testament according to Numbers chapter 6, verses 2 through 4, called the Nazarite vow. The Nazarite vow is associated with people like Samson and Samuel and John the Baptist, but there were many, many Jews who took a Nazarite vow. It was basically a vow of devotion or commitment to God that said, “I want to live at the highest level of self-denial. I will be unconcerned about what I wear. I will be unconcerned about my looks, my hair and all of that, and I will touch neither wine nor strong

drink." In other words, "I'm cutting myself off from the celebrating kind of life, and I want to live in a pure and simple and straightforward and disciplined devotion to God." John the Baptist was such a one - you can read about him in Luke 1:15 - who totally abstained from anything that would in any way potentiate alcohol disability. And he stayed away from wine and strong drink altogether to be sure that he was living at the highest level. That Nazarite vow, as I said, was probably taken by many, many Jews who chose to live at the highest level of dedication.

And then there is the interesting mention of Timothy, in 1 Timothy 5:23, where Paul says, "take a little wine for your stomach's sake." And it certainly seems to me that the fact that Paul had to tell Timothy to do that meant that it was against the grain of what Timothy's normal behavior was like. He had to say take a little wine for medicinal purposes most likely because Timothy normally wouldn't take any. If the Nazarites lived at that level, certainly those who were leaders in the church would live at that level.

So the man who is in spiritual leadership is not a man who is given to wine. Not a man given to lingering beside his wine, being addicted to his wine, and all that goes with that. And as you compare the other scriptures as well, the same statement is made with some differences, that the deacons are not to be near the "much wine" and the older women here in Titus. But I think the spirit of all of that is the same - whether you're an elder or a deacon or a person in the congregation, you avoid that which can intoxicate.

Then fourthly, in verse 7, "not pugnacious." That is used only here and in 1 Timothy 3:3 and has the idea of simply of someone who hits you. It's someone who punches you, basically. The old lexicon says "a giver of blows" - somebody who uses his hand, fist, a stick, a rock to hit you. Now apparently that was one way conflict was resolved in ancient times. It's still a way, and most of us are a little more dignified than that. We resolve conflict by more subtle means than vengeance. But in 2 Corinthians 11 - kind of an interesting insight - Paul says to the Corinthians, 2 Corinthians 11:19, "For you, being so wise, bear with the foolish gladly." In other words, "learn to bear with foolish people" - "for you bear with anyone if he enslaves you, if he devours you, if he takes advantage of you, if he exalts himself, or if he hits you in the face." I mean, learn to live with it, it's just going to be that way. There are some folks out there who go around hitting you in the face if they're upset at you, and that's the way it is. But anybody who goes around punching people doesn't belong in spiritual ministry, obviously.

Second Timothy 2:24 and 25 says that "the servant of the Lord must not fight" - must not strive. Here is the idea of this self-willed quick-tempered or even alcohol-affected individual who resorts to

physical violence. And it may well even include other forms of verbal violence, but primarily the idea of just lashing out. Pelagius once wrote, "He cannot strike anyone who is a disciple of that Christ who being struck returned no answering blow." There's no place for a fighter. And there's no place for somebody who punches back, who hits back, who fights back - certainly not only with the fist but the spirit of a pugnacious person. A spiritual leader is to resolve conflict peacefully, biblically, in a godly, gentle, meek, and humble manner.

Number five then, and the last one in verse 7, which is the negative aspect or what a pastor must not be – “not fond of sordid gain,” “not fond of sordid gain.” Here again you have one word, a very interesting word, coming from two Greek words: *aischros*, which means “shameful”; and *kerdos*, which means “gain.” Somebody who is “after personal gain shamefully.” That is to say, he doesn't care how he makes money; he doesn't care how he aggrandizes himself; he doesn't care how he amasses material things. He lacks integrity; he lacks honesty. There is nothing wrong with paying the preacher, 1 Corinthians chapter 9, verses 11 and 14 say, “if you preach the gospel you should live of the gospel.” What that means is not “you should live what you preach”; that's not the idea. What it means is, “if you preach, you ought to get your living from your preaching.” That's what Paul is saying. First Timothy 5:17 says “the elders that rule well are worthy of double honor, especially if they work hard in the word and doctrine.” That's to be an understood fact. We are to be paid for ministry if God so chooses; and not all pastors and elders have to be, but it's an option; it's available. Paul says it's right.

But we don't do it for money. Peter says, 1 Peter 5:2, we do not do this “for sordid gain” - same concept. We're not in it for money. We don't do it for money. We can be remunerated, but it isn't because we want the money. False teachers do it for money. They want money. They seek the “sordid gain.” Paul wrote to Timothy about that in chapter 6 of 1 Timothy: “godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied with contentment. We brought nothing into the world, we can't take anything out of it either. So if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and darkness, ruin and destruction, for the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many a pang.” Then this, “but *flee* from these things, you man of God.” “Man of God” is a technical term for a pastor, an elder in a church, a preacher of the Word; it's a term used to describe the prophets of the Old Testament. If you're one of those, flee the love of money. Any man who is enamored by money will compromise himself and somehow will gain in a sordid way. The man who is in spiritual leadership is not to be greedy. He is not to be indulgent, because he can be so easily corrupted. He handles God's money. If you have a man who is selfish and greedy and you put him in charge of the money in the church, you have a very volatile situation.

Now the typical false teacher was just the opposite of the kind of person the pastor is to be. The typical false teacher could be well described by the very terms that you have just gone over in Titus. The typical false teacher was “self-willed, quick-tempered, addicted to wine, pugnacious, and loved money.” That's why they were into it. If you run into a false teacher, you find that: they are self-willed, self-motivated, self-directed, arrogant, and they get angry when anybody stands in their way. They are those typical megalomaniacs who become furious when anyone thwarts their dream. They very often are addicted to wine. They are into the good life. They strike out and lash because they're basically not under the control of the Holy Spirit, and they do what they do for money.

But that's not the kind of person you want leading in the church. They had that in Crete with the false teachers. Verse 10 calls them “rebellious...empty talkers, deceivers.” And at the end of verse 11, they do what they do “for the sake of sordid gain." So they were experiencing the very kind of false teachers that are the opposite of what the requirement for a pastor is.

Now let's look at the positive side in verse 8, just ever so briefly. The positive side is in verse 8. On the other hand, here are six positives: “hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout and self-controlled.” This is what a pastor must be. “Hospitable,” a Greek word *philoxenos* from two words: *phileo*, “to love”; *xenos*, “strangers” – “to love strangers” is what it means. It's used also in 1 Timothy 3:2. It is an oft-repeated attribute of Christian character. And we don't have the time this morning; had we the time, we could do a study of hospitality. You find it in Romans 12:13, Hebrews 13:2; you find it over in 1 Peter 4:9 and in 1 Timothy 5:10. And what we mean by hospitality primarily, simply, in a general and somewhat leading sense - although it may have other implications - is that it is the idea of opening your life and your resources to people you don't know. That's basically it. And primarily, in the context of the early church, it had to do with other Christians.

As I said earlier, bars and taverns and inns and places like that in the ancient world were despicable dens of sin and debauchery - very dangerous. Robbers were there, and prostitutes were there. And many believers, of course, traveled; they were on the road traveling, maybe for business. Some of them were traveling because perhaps they were moving from church to church in ministry. Some of them were traveling because they had been kicked out of their city under persecution, driven from their own homes and dispossessed of all that they had. And so there was plenty of opportunity in the early church to open up your home and your food and your life and your clothing and your resources to meet the needs of people you didn't know.

Hospitality is not having your friends over for dinner. That's not hospitality in a biblical sense. It's nice to do that, but in Luke chapter 12 - chapter 14 rather - our Lord said “when you have a dinner, don't invite your friends; invite the people you don't know. Go out and find strangers and poor people and all of that.” And, He said, “people who can never pay you back, who have no resource to pay you back.” That's the essence of loving strangers. Opening your life, opening all your resources to anyone and everyone who is in need. That's hospitality. And that's to characterize this kind of man. His life is an open book. He is a generous man. He gives anything and everything to anyone who has need. The opposite of loving gain - he sees whatever he has as a means to meeting the needs of those he doesn't even know - generosity.

Secondly, he is to be characterized as “loving what is good.” That's a very simple thing. Again a combination of two words: *phileo* and *agathon*, “to love what is good.” *Agathon* or *agathos,* from which we get that old name *Agatha*, which means “good.” It means he's a lover of good men and a lover of good things. You know, they say - and it's true - you can tell a lot by looking at a man's friends, can't you? And you can tell a lot by looking at a man's life and seeing what he surrounds himself with. Who and what are around the man? Is he the kind of man who is involved with things that are good? With people that are good? What are his friends like? Who are his friends? Who does he associate with? What does he do in his leisure time? What does he pile around him in his world? What is precious to him? What is important? Is it good? Is it bad? His heart responds to what is good, what is noble.

I suppose the best summation of this kind of man is given in Philippians 4:8 where it says, "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute [or report], if there's any excellence, if there's anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things." A lover of what is true, what is honorable, what is right, what is pure, what is lovely, what is of good report, a lover of things that are excellent - you can tell so much about a person by what he loves, by what he involves himself with, and by who he loves and who he associates with. Devoted to what is right. Praises worthy people. Praises worthy actions. His heart responds to what is excellent.

Thirdly, in verse 8, “sensible.” This is another one of those compound words that takes two words in the Greek: the word *phronm*, meaning “mind”; and the word *sz*, “to save.” And the Greeks used to say “he is a man who has saving thoughts,” or “he's right minded.” In other words, he's in control of his mind, and his thoughts are redeemed thoughts; they're saved thoughts. They're delivered from the mundane and the earthy and the base. He rescues his mind out of the gutter, you might say. And also he lifts his mind above the trivial, the passing, the frivolous - not a clown, not a jokester, not a jester,

not frivolous, but a man with a sure and a steady wisdom, a man with a cool mind, unimpassioned, careful in judgment, thoughtful, wise, profound, deep with a disciplined mind. First Timothy 3:2 translates the same word “prudent.” It's a form of *wisdom*, of disciplined wisdom. This is the kind of man to be a pastor.

And then the fourth one is “just,” *dikaios*, the New Testament word for “righteous.” It describes conduct that meets God's standard. He's a man whose life is approved by God. It's a legal term indicating that the divine verdict on his life is positive. God looks at him and says “this man is right; this man is good; this man is righteous; this man meets My standard.” He's a man whose life is approved by God. That qualification alone would be enough to describe the man, wouldn't it? Because that would cover everything else. If God approves of him, that's enough. He's right with God. He is known as a man whom God approves of because he lives according to divine standards.

And then it adds - and these two words are very often partners in the New Testament, such as 1 Thessalonians 2:10 - it adds, "righteous,” “devout." That's the word for “holy,” not the word *hagios*, but *hosios*, which also means “holy.” It means “pure, unpolluted, free from any stain of sin.” Here we are back to that stainless life again, “above reproach.” In every area of his life - everywhere you look - every area of his life is exemplary; there's no stain of sin there.

You say, "Well these things, this is pretty - I mean, are there people like this?” If you look at their life closely, can you find people who don't have their life stained with sin?" Of course, no one is free from sin, but sin committed and sin confessed and sin dealt with and sin that doesn't scandalize the church. Yes, yes, Christians can live like that by God's grace and mercy and power of the Spirit.

One lexicon translated this word "devout," *hosios*, as “supremely holy.” Now it's a wonderful word. It has to do with a life that is utterly set apart from sin, a life that is pure in its very character. In fact, in Acts 2:27 it calls the Messiah "Thy holy one," and it uses the word *hosios*. So this level, and I only point that illustration out to let you know it's a high level of holiness, not lower than say *hagios*, in case some of you who know that word we’re asking. It's used in Acts 13:35, Hebrews 7:26, and even Revelation 16:5 when referring to the Lord Jesus Christ. It has to do with being holy. The man is right before God - that's God's judgment. He is holy in the way he lives, and that's man's judgment. We look at his life and we say “yes, there is no stain there.”

And then lastly, the sixth qualification, “self-controlled,” literally “restrained.” He's a man who has control of his life. And I want to speak to this issue for a moment. I hear all the time people say, "Look, we need to have a lot of accountability. You need accountability.” We hear about some pastor who

fell into sin and we say, "Well, he didn't have any accountability. Well, he needed to have accountability. If he had accountability, he'd be all right." Let me tell you something, folks. There's a place for spiritual accountability. There's no question we need friends and partners and co-laborers in the ministry to rub up against us and to help us to walk before the Lord as we should. But I want you to know something, if a man cannot control his life in righteousness and holiness when he's absolutely all alone and by himself, he doesn't belong in a pastorate. If he is the kind of person that has to have a committee walking around hanging on to his clothes, he doesn't belong in the pastorate. If the man is controlled from the outside, he is unqualified if he's not controlled on the inside.

You can't follow me around 24 hours a day. If I'm so fragile as your pastor that I have to have people looking over my shoulder 24 hours a day, then I shouldn't be your pastor; because if there isn't a commitment to godliness on the inside that holds in check my life, it is fruitless for you to control me from the outside and expect me to minister to you as if I was controlled from the inside. I hear that all the time, "Well, you know, if he only had accountability and the problem was he didn't have any accountability." I don't, I don't see it that way. I understand there's a place for accountability, but I also know that if a man wants to sin, he can find the time and place to do it. And if it isn't in his heart to be holy, I don't care what you do on the outside of that man, it isn't going to keep him from failing.

The character of a pastor comes from the inside. He is “self-controlled,” *egkrats*, he has control of his life. He does not need to be policed. You can send him all by himself to the farthest corner of the world and he'll walk with God in the integrity of his heart, if nobody knows who he is, because that's the kind of man he is. He has the grace of God in his life to the degree that he is mature and he can apply it in dealing with the temptations of life. The general character for one who is a pastor, as you can see, is very, very demanding – very, very demanding.

And when men in the pastorate and the ministry do sin, serious consequences fall. First Timothy 5:20, "Those who continue in sin rebuke in the presence of all so that the rest also may be fearful of sinning." Public rebuke to an elder who sins, a pastor who sins, is fitting.

Now you say, "Well the standards are so high for his general character, why is this so?" Here's the answer. Because that's how God wants you to live. Did you know that? God wants you to be “not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not involved with wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain.” He wants you to be “hospitable, love what is good, sensible, just, devout and self- controlled,” and that's why He wants your leaders to be that because how are you going to get to that point if you don't have somebody to follow? It isn't that these people are to be different than everybody else; they are to be

what everybody else is to be. That's what leadership is all about. Luke 6:40, "And when a man is fully discipled, he will be like his teacher." The standard is high because God wants his flock to be holy, even as He is holy.

So, that leaves us only with one other thought on this text and that is to discuss the matter of his being skilled as a teacher. And we'll do that in two weeks, next week is Christmas service. Let me close with a quote. Reading through *Lectures to My Students* by Spurgeon we find this, "If a pastor were called to an ordinary position and to common work, common grace might perhaps satisfy him. Though even then it would be an indolent satisfaction. But being elect to extraordinary labors and called to a place of unusual peril, he should be anxious to possess that superior strength which alone is adequate to his station. His pulse of vital godliness must beat strongly and regularly. His eye of faith must be bright. His foot of resolution must be firm. His hand of activity must be quick. His whole inner man must be in the highest degree of sanity. It is said of the Egyptians that they chose their priests from the most learned of their philosophers, and then they esteemed their priests so highly that they chose their kings from them. We require to have for God's ministers the pick of all the Christian host, such men indeed that if the nation wanted kings they could not do better than elevate them to the throne. For some work, we choose none but the strong. And when God calls us to ministerial labor we should endeavor to get grace that we may be strengthened into fitness for our position and not be any mere novices carried away by the temptations of Satan to the injury of the church and our own ruin. We are to stand equipped with the whole armor of God, ready for feats of valor not expected of others. To us, self-denial, self-forgetfulness, patience, perseverance, long-suffering must be everyday virtues and who is sufficient for these things? We had need live very near to God if we would approve ourselves in our vocation." Let's bow in prayer.

Father, as we think about the required character for pastor, we are reminded again that this is because this is the required character for all Your people, and it's fitting, Lord, that having discussed all of this we now stand before the Table of our Lord in which we remember His death for us. For it is here that we are confronted again with the need to examine our own lives and ask if we are the leadership and the people that You desire us to be. Lord, this is a time for heart examination. As the apostle Paul said, "Let a man examine himself and then let him eat and drink."

Father, we want to be the kind of pastors and leaders that You want us to be. And this people wants in the depths of their heart to be the people You want them to be. But, Lord, we stumble and we are battling all the time against our unredeemed human flesh to do what the longing of our new nature desires. And, Lord, we have come to this Table to say thank You for the death of Christ, thank You for what He has provided for us, and again to confess our sin in need of forgiveness. We thank You that His blood goes on cleansing us from all sin. Lord, as we come this morning to this Table to partake,

may we not do it in an unworthy way, but may we do it with a broken and a contrite spirit. May we say, "Lord, this is what we want to be."

Thank You for preserving us, Lord. Thank You for redeeming us, and now make us what You want us to be. May what was begun the moment of our faith in Christ, what was begun, as it were, when we stood at the feet of the, at the foot of the cross, what was started there moved to fulfillment as we move day by day in the power of Your Spirit and Your Word.

Now, Lord, we pray that as we come we might not only remember what Christ has done for us but what He longs to produce in us. The work that He began there, which will go on until we're glorified. And may this be a time for us to renew the very pledge and promise we made when we were first saved and repented of sin and submitted to Christ. May we do that all over again, repenting of our sin and affirming obedience to our Christ.

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