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

What in the World Is the Church to Be?, Part 2
Scripture: Selected Scriptures
Code: 1208

We began last week, and we'll continue this week, and finish this brief series. And fitting it is that we understand exactly what's involved and what is the form or the pattern that the New Testament sets for the church. Now, in past months, we have talked about the relationship of believers to each other in the body of Christ. That's the invisible church, and I want you to get the distinction. We've talked about how that Christians are related to each other in an invisible way. But now, we're talking, not so much about the invisible church, the body and our ministry of gifts to each other, as we are talking about the pattern and the form for the visible church. When we come together on Lord's Day, when we bring ourselves into this place, gathering as believers, what form are we to follow? What patterns does the New Testament give for the church together visibly? That's what we're studying in this series: the invisible church, the ministry of spiritual gifts, the fellowship of the body, and all of these areas we discussed in connection with that series some months ago.

Now, you all know that we are Christ's church. Every believer is a part of the church. We are the church. All who love Jesus Christ are His ransomed, His redeemed, His assembled children. We are the body of Christ. We are positionally one, by virtue of being baptized into the body by the Spirit of God. We are a living organism. We are a community of those redeemed by Jesus Christ. We are a mystery body, Paul says, an invisible group. That is, the world can't see us. We don't always show up on the outside. We're not marked by some tag always that identifies us as true believers. And, as I mentioned to you last week, sometimes we don't even know ourselves who's real and who isn't. And so, we're very careful to be sure that we pray, and study, and analyze somebody's life as carefully as we can before we put them in a position of Christian leadership to determine whether they're for real or not, because we know Satan sows the tares among the wheat.

Christ, then, designed the church as an invisible body of those who love Him. But He also designed it to be visible to the world. You heard the testimony of a pagan philosopher who saw in the church something beautiful and something unique. That is the design of God, that the invisible church become visible and, by its collective visibility, be a living testimony in the world to the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The tragedy of it is that the visible church is not always the invisible church, and the invisible church is not always visible.

Now, if you can untangle that, I think you'll understand what I mean. We who really are believers don't always show up that way, and sometimes people who appear to be believers aren't. And, thus, the picture to the world is mixed and confused, diabolically so. That was Satan's plan all the time. But in

spite of Satan's effort to confuse the issue, the church is to be visible. You have a lot of people today saying we don't need the church. We don't need the local church. We don't need a building on the corner. We don't need to congregate together. Should be spontaneous, home-oriented, out in the boondocks. I believe God designed the church to be a visible testimony to the world as it comes together.

As we mentioned last Sunday morning, when you got up this morning and came to this place, you were a living testimony to the living Christ. This is the Lord's resurrection day. And I believe in the design of God. He called us together. And with the confusion and the mixture that Satan has brought about, it demands of us that our testimony be just that much more clear. We need to be clear in terms of our testimony in order to shine out of the confusion.

Now, what is the correct form? What is the pattern that the church is to follow in terms of its worship, and its fellowship, and its coming together for study? Well, we saw last week, first of all, the history of the church by looking at the first church, the foundation of the church, the Jerusalem church. We saw that first local assembly formed on the Day of Pentecost. We saw that it was a very large assembly. They had 3,000 additions the first day. Those, many of them left, but it continued to grow daily, Acts 2 tells us. That church was a growing church, a thriving church, a Holy Spirit church, a productive church, a God-blessed church, a dynamic church, and outreach church.

And as we looked at it carefully, we wanted to find out what were the ingredients that made it that kind of a church. And we found out there were basically four things, plus one other thing, that made it what it ought to be. It was involved only in four things, really: studying the apostles' doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread around the communion table, prayer. Those four things. That was the beginning and the end of the program of the first church. And the fifth thing was everybody went everywhere talking about Jesus Christ.

And when we talk about what the church is today, we have to realize that the church today is much different in many ways. Many people have decided that in order to have an effective church you have to have an entertainment center, with super-programs and gimmicks. You have to bypass all the uncommitted people and program for them and let them stay off the hook. But that's not how it was in early church. They had four things. They studied doctrine, they had fellowship, they prayed, and they broke bread. And, as a result, everybody went everywhere preaching the gospel. And that is really the beginning and the end of what the church is designed to be in its time together and as it exists together. That church was a learning church, it was a fellowshipping church, it was a praying church, and it was a church that met at the table of the Lord to share in the remembrance of His death. And then, it was a church that went out into the world to communicate what it believed. And the effect was fantastic. The Bible tells us in Acts 2:47, that they had favor with all the people. And daily, people were added to the church.

The visible church in Jerusalem had an impact. It had a dynamic impact. It was a local assembly of believers gathered together, meeting on the first day of the week for the study of the Word of God, for fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer. And then leaving that place after the first day of the week, they continued to meet together as they were able during the week. And in times when they weren't together, they were out where sinners were, communicating Jesus Christ. The leaders of that early church, we saw last week, were the apostles. God gave them His best for those first few years, so that they might be grounded and rooted firmly. And then, finally, it was time to ordain some deacons there who could run the church, and the apostles could move on to other ministries. And then, we saw how Jerusalem church finally, after a period of years, sent somebody to Antioch by the name Barnabas and started another one there. And then from there, churches began to spring up in local communities everyplace. And, as we read through Paul's letters, we find Paul writing letters to various assemblies meeting for the same four purposes: studying the Word, fellowshipping, breaking bread around the Lord's Table, praying, and then the fifth plus, everybody going everywhere to share Christ.

You say, "Well, what's the difference between them and us?" Well, I think the difference is as simple as commitment. Maybe they were a little closer to the fire, being closer to the time of the life of Christ, and the very specific revelations of the Holy Spirit's power in miracles and signs and wonders. But nevertheless, the difference is the difference of personal commitment. And so, we saw the history of the founding of the church.

Then, secondly, we began to look at the ministry of the church. And with that we came to 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, and I'd like you to just turn there in your Bible and kind of stick around 1 Timothy for a few minutes. And we'll review very quickly, and then move on. The church is then to be committed to four things. They are basic, and they are the impetus to that fifth plus, which is every member preaching Christ. But further than that, there is, in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, much information about how we are to behave ourselves in the church. We know what the church is to be. We've seen that by the pattern of Jerusalem and the other churches. And now, we want to see how the form of the church takes shape. What is it that Paul sets up as a pattern for us to follow in the church? You know, it's very interesting when you kind of analyze churches biblically, how they don't ever fit the pattern. When you try to get into a biblical form for the church, there is just a basic form, and then there's a whole lot of area where you can just about go any direction you want. And, unfortunately, most churches have taken that area where the Bible isn't specific and created great, huge traditions that have become equal to biblical truth, and they can't change any of it. So, they find themselves in a mold that is un-adaptable to the day in which they exist.

All right, the ministry of the church, then, first of all, we said the basic task of the church is the teaching of sound doctrine. The church is to teach sound doctrine. That is what we're all about. We're not here to give you platitudes. We're not here to give you music programs. We're not here to provide

for you entertainment for your children, to keep the teenagers off the street. We are here not to repair family problems from a psychological, analytical standpoint. We are not here to counsel you in terms of psychology. We are here to teach you sound doctrine. That is the ministry of the church, beginning, middle, and end. That's what it's all about. And any ministry that is less than a concentrated effort to teach sound doctrine starts out on a non-biblical basis. We are committed, then, at Grace Church, to the sound doctrine of the Word of God. And we believe that that involves teaching it explicitly.

Now, I gave you a little principle last week, and I want you to be reminded of it. So, look at 1 Timothy 4:13. And here is the pattern that the apostle Paul gives to Timothy for how to teach sound doctrine. And this is a little verse that tells us what expository preaching is all about. "Till I come, give attendance to," and here's the pattern of expository preaching, "to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." Now, there you have what really is involved in an expository message. You read it. You explain it. That's the doctrine. And you exhort. You apply it. That's the three points of expository preaching: read the text, explain the text, and apply the text. And that's exactly what he says for Timothy to do. That is the key to any kind of a biblical ministry. The church is to be about teaching sound doctrine. And the tragedy of it is that the church is doing everything but that. It's amazing to go across the country, and church after church after church, there is a dearth and a void of sound doctrine.

Second Timothy 2:2, "The things that thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also." Titus chapter 2 verse 1, "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine." We are to preach sound doctrine. Timothy has to do it, not just till Paul comes, but till Christ comes. That is the pattern of the church. Then, we saw, not only the basic ministry, but we saw the basic leadership, and we're still reviewing. The basic leadership, those who teach sound doctrine and apply it. The church is to teach it. The basic leadership are those who teach it and apply it to the people.

Now, there are two leaders, two classes or orders of leaders designed in the New Testament for the church. First of all, elders. Last week, we considered at great length the ministry of elders. Just to review a couple of points. In a church, there's always a plurality of elders. That is, there's a plurality of leadership. No one man is the chief elder. There's no such animal as a chief elder. None exist. There's no such person as one who runs the church. That's completely contrary to scriptural principle that God works through the collective minds of elders in the church. And so, there is a plurality of elders. They are qualified by God. They are responsible to God. They are not responsible to the congregation. They are not responsible to a committee. They are not responsible to a board of directors or a board of anything else. They are directly responsible to God to rule the church. The people do not rule the church; the elders rule the church. The people select the elders.

In Acts, for example, chapter 14 verse 21, we read this. "And when they had preached the gospel to that city," this is Paul, "and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch,

confirming the souls of the disciples and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we much through much tribulation enter the Kingdom of God." Now, watch this, "And when they had ordained elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting." That's how they ordained them. You say, how does God reveal to the church who the elders are so that the church can ordain them? "Through prayer and fasting, they commended them to the Lord on whom they believed." An elder is commended to the Lord, for it is to the Lord that he is answerable. The church selects its elders through prayer and fasting, determining in their heart who it is that God has laid His hand on for leadership in that church. Elders are not chosen on the basis of their knowledge of the business world. They are not chosen on the basis of their financial ability. They are not chosen because they happen to be loud, and take kind of the chief places. They are not chosen because they have an innate ability to be leaders. They are chosen because God has laid His on them, and designed them for the leadership of the church, and they are chosen through the prayer and fasting of the people, commended to God to whom they are thus answerable.

Now, what are the requirements for an elder? Last time we saw them as Paul gave them to Timothy. This time, I want you see them as Paul gave them to Titus. Titus 1:5. Titus 1:5, Paul gives to Titus, who incidentally is founding churches, and that's why Timothy and Titus had to have all this information. They were busy about planting churches everywhere, and they needed to know the order that God wanted. Now, in Titus 1:5, we have the qualifications for an elder: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting." He put in there to set the form down for the church in Crete. "And to ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." It's interesting that, in the New Testament, the evangelist ordained the elders.

Now, there aren't any evangelists around nowadays. Well, hardly any, who are true evangelists. When we hear the word "evangelist," we think of something which is really foreign to a biblical evangelist. A biblical evangelist was a church planter. And so, this evangelist, Titus, is to ordain elders in every city to rule the church. Now, these are those who are responsible for the leadership of the church. I'm an elder. Some people we call quote-unquote "laymen" are elders. We are equal. I'm not above anybody else. I'm not more than anybody else. I'm not reverend somebody. I'm not father somebody. I'm not holy somebody. I'm not saint somebody. I'm just me, and that's all. Just plain old John. I have been given the privilege, by God, of being one of the elders in this church. I have the particular responsibility of being the teaching elder, but it's a plurality.

Now, here are the requirements. Verse 6, and, as I said last week, if you feel before God that this is the ministry God has called you to, and that you qualify in the energy of Holy Spirit for this, we'd like to know that that's your feeling, and we'd like to know if you desire this, because it's a good thing to desire it, Paul said. Six, "If any be blameless," and that doesn't mean perfect, obviously, or we'd all be disqualified. That means if any be without some great blotch on his life that would be point of criticism by everybody. "The husband of one wife," and we've talked about that last time. "Having faithful children, not accused of profligacy, riot, or unruly." You know one of the qualifications of an elder? His

children are to be believers. His children are to be believers. He has to give evidence of having been effective in communicating his faith to his own family. An elder's children are to be believers. And they are not to be unruly. There are some who have believing children who are rather unruly. I'm sure my father fought that particular requirement for years. A man with pagan children cannot be appointed as an elder. They are to follow their father's faith with a measure of godly conduct. Certainly, you don't expect to see a, you know, total sainthood in the child, but with a measure of godly conduct.

Then, he says in verse 7, and here he uses the word "bishop," which, again, is the same as elder. This just describes his duties, not his office. He's an elder. His duty is as bishop. A bishop means overseer. "As an overseer must be blameless as the steward of God." That is, he realizes that he is a steward. That is, he doesn't own anything. He manages the affairs of God for the body of Christ. "Not self-willed." He's not in it to please himself. "Not soon angry," hot-tempered, "not given to wine." Remember, I told you that means he doesn't linger over long beside his wine. The only thing they could drink in those days was wine. The water wasn't pure. When you drank it, you drank it and you left. If you were, you know, on the up-and-up. If you hung around the bottle a long time, that was evidence you had a problem. "Not given to wine, not violent." And that word "violent" means he likes to use his fists. Not that kind of a man. "Not given to filthy lucre." Doesn't pursue money, totally. Verse 8, "A lover of hospitality." That means he's a guy who loves to open his house and let strangers come in. If you're going to do that, if you're going to throw your house open, you're going to have to have your house in order, right? And that's why it says he should have believing children, and he should be managing his own house. If he can't manage his own house, Paul told Timothy, how could he manage the church of God? He needs to have a house that could be thrown open to anybody to come in and see on display what Christian living is all about. "A lover of stranger love." That's the word "hospitality." Loves to let strangers in. "A lover of good," and the word "men" is implied there. It could mean good men; it could mean just good. "Sober-minded." He knows priorities. This guy knows what matters. "Just, holy, and temperate, self-control." Now, we've talked about all these last time, but there they are again.

Now, may I add, this is not a board, and this is not a committee. This is a fellowship of God-appointed men, God-qualified, God-gifted, Spirit-filled, given to the local church to rule and teach that church. And we saw that, last time in 1 Timothy 5:17, it says, "Let the elders that rule well," assuming that the elders do rule, "be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the Word and doctrine," because that, of course, is the basic task of the church. That's the hardest thing there is to do. That takes the most discipline, and the most striving, and the most work, and battling of Satan to be a faithful teacher of the Word of God. And so, elders are to be honored. It's an office with honor involved in it.

In Acts chapter 20, there are two verses that I want to share with you quickly, verse 17, that give you a little idea of how these elders were appointed in one city, at least: Ephesus. Paul's going to meet with the Ephesian elders. In verse 28 of Acts 20, it says this, and here he's speaking to the elders.

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves.” The first thing that an elder has to do, a leader in the church, a teacher of the Word of God, one who rules over the fellowship of believers in a given local situation, he needs to take heed to himself. He needs to be constantly evaluating his own life. “And to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers.” We are responsible as elders to take heed to the entire flock. It’s very easy sometimes to say we pray for everybody in the church. Well, that’s ridiculous. We need to take heed individually to the flock that God has given, pointing them out and marking them out, seeing those that have an injury, those that have a problem, those that have a need, and specifically praying for those. And our elders that are sharing together, met together even this morning an hour and 15 minutes before any of you came, and we did that. We prayed together this morning for you, some of you specifically, that God would work in your lives in accordance with your need. And not only that, are we not only to take heed to the flock, but he says, “To feed the church of God.” And what is it that we must feed on? What is it? The Word of God.

And so, we are responsible to take heed to ourselves as elders, to take heed to the flock of God and mark them out. See the ones that need our prayers, our concern, our discipline, our rebuke, our reproof, our love, whatever they need, and go and do that to them, and we are also responsible as overseers to feed the flock of God. So, the elders, then, controlled doctrine and discipline in the church.

Now, it’s a serious responsibility. It’s a grave responsibility to God, but it’s one where there is great honor and great reward for such men as are chosen for that office. In 1 Peter 5, Peter describes an elder in this way. “The elders who are among you I exhort, who am also an elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.” Here’s what he says to the elder. Listen to it. “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight of it.” Feed the flock and take the oversight. Watch what’s going on. When a sheep was injured, the pastor, as really a shepherd was called, would go and minister to that sheep. “Take heed to the flock of God. Feed it. Take the oversight of it. Not by constraint.” Not because, “Well, I got to do it, boy. It’s my job, and I’m going to stick my nose in there. Boy, is this distasteful,” and do it. No, “but willingly, and not for filthy lucre.” You don’t only minister to the rich people who might, you know, throw a little your way. No. “But of a ready mind.” Whoever needs it; you move right in. “Neither as being lords over God’s heritage.” You don’t rule with a rod of iron, “But examples to the flock.” You know how the best way to lead? Be an example. Set the pattern. Set the pattern. If you try to lead people, and you’re not an example, you know what happens? They react to your leadership. You need to lead them an example.

And then, he said this, and this is great. It’s worth doing, friends. If you’re an elder, it’s worth it because of this verse. “And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.” That’s a crown promised to those who are given the oversight of the church. What a blessed promise it is. And the wonderful thing about getting that crown is. We’ll be able to cast it at the feet of Jesus Christ, for it really belongs to Him.

Then, there's a second office, and we'll get to that right now. Acts 6:1. Remember, I told you the church of Jerusalem was led by the apostles, but finally it was time for them to move on. And after several years, there were men of mature enough Christian character to take over the leadership of the Jerusalem church, and the apostles could then move on. And in chapter 6 of Acts, that time arrived, and they were ready to ordain some men in that church itself who could lead, and they could move on to other ministries.

"In those days," verse 1, "when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration." One of the responsibilities of the church was take care of widows. So, there was a little hassle. They thought that most of the goodies were going to the Jewish widows. Just one of these kind of hinky-dinky little hassles that the apostles didn't want to fool with. So, this kind of was the straw that broke the camel's back. And in verse 2, they decided, "Man, it's time to get out of this little nitpicking end of it. We've got to get into what really matters." So, verse 2, "Then, the 12 called the multitude of the disciples and said unto them, 'It is not fitting that we should leave the Word of God and serve tables.'" In other words, "We're trying to study to communicate a doctrine to you. We are studying the Word of God to share with you, and we've got to go over here and serve your dinner, and run over here and take care of this and run over here and do this. And we're leaving the Word of God." They understood what their priority was.

Verse 3, "Wherefore, brethren, look among you for seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business." They were responsible for handing out the finances to the various individuals who had the needs, so that the elders could give themselves wholly to the Word of God and prayer. That, we see in verse 4. "We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word." And, in a sense, they set the pattern for elders, did the apostles.

Let me give you the qualifications in 1 Timothy chapter 3 for a deacon. First Timothy 3:8, "In like manner, must the deacons be grave." That doesn't mean a down-in-the-mouth, boring-type person; it means serious minded. "Not double-tongued." Doesn't tell some person one thing and some other person something else. "Again, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre." Not after money. "Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience." That is, he should be Christ-like. That's what that statement's getting at. I'm not going to take time to explain it. The mystery of the faith is what? What is the mystery of our faith? God in Christ, right? That's the mystery. That God and man were one in Jesus Christ. "And holding that mystery in a pure conscience," means to live Christ-like. All right, he's to be Christ-like.

Verse 10, "And let those also first be proved." You don't just have anybody be a deacon. You watch and see who's proven himself worthy. "Then, let them use the office of a deacon, being found

blameless." Then, verse 12, "Let the deacons be the husband of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well." Verse 13, "For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchased to themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith, which is in Christ Jesus."

Now, there are the standards for being a deacon. If you're a deacon, you ought to review them. And if you fit the standards, but somebody around here hasn't appointed you a deacon, you ought to be appointed a deacon. We're going to ask God to reveal your name to us in order that you might serve in the capacity that God has given you to this local assembly to serve. If you're here, and you are a biblical elder and a biblical deacon, then it's up to us by prayer and fasting to determine that, so that you can be lifted to the place of service God designed you for in this local assembly, because we need your leadership.

Oh, there are the standards. Serious, not double-tongued, not given to wine, not greedy of money, Christ-like, blameless, the husband of one wife, ruling children. So forth, and so on. Nothing about teaching. Did you notice that? Because the deacon's ministry is not a teaching ministry. The deacon's ministry is a ministry of carrying out the ministrations and the business of the church. But did you notice? There's not one business requirement in there. The guy could be a mathematical moron. That's not even the issue. The issue is all spiritual. God has a much easier time operating through Spirit-filled men than He does through brilliant men who aren't Spirit-filled. And so, every qualification is always that way.

Incidentally, I believe also that there may be deaconesses in the Bible. Verse 11, "Even so must their wives," and the women there could refer to deaconesses. Some say it refers to deacons' wives. Others deaconesses. But if you read Romans 16, it seems as though Phoebe, Phoebe there is called a servant. And the word is the same as "deacon." So, it could be that Phoebe was a deaconess, because there was a need for some women to help the woman candidates for baptism, to just help them get dressed and so forth and so on. There was a need for women to take care of some of the cooking and some of the ministry to widows. And so, it seems to indicate that there were deaconesses who worked with the deacons. And they had to be, verse 11, "serious, not gossipers." No gossiper deaconesses. "Sober-minded." They knew priorities, too. "Faithful in all things." You see, if you get this kind of leadership in the church, friends, you've got it, and you're ready to go.

Now, that's the leadership. And keep in mind, every leader in the church is not responsible to the congregation. It's responsible to God, to God. Now, that's the leadership that Christ gave the church. That's it. Deacons, elders, and perhaps deaconesses to assist the deacons. That's it. And you don't see any organizational chart. The organization chart of the church, my friend, is a circle. Everybody's equal. We're all together.

All right, now that comes down to the last point: the congregation. Finally, we're going to get to all of you who have been saying, "Yeah, you deacons, yeah, get it on, you elders." And now, it's your turn.

We're going to get to the congregation at this point. And, well, the Holy Spirit will speak to you. And this is where I want you to start writing if you haven't started writing yet on your green paper.

All right, the basic task of the church, teach sound doctrine. The basic task of the leadership is to be the teachers of the doctrine and apply the doctrine to the people. The basic task of the people, Spirit-filled people who learn doctrine and go out and do something about it. You're the object of all this ministry that God designed of leadership, so that we can communicate to you who are out there, and someday, perhaps, you will come up to being a deacon, an elder, as God designed, or maybe an evangelist, pastor, teacher. But it's when you're faithful in little things that He'll give you more.

All right, so we come to the final level, the congregation, and this is really what it all comes down to. The flock, who are to do the work of the ministry. You know that, if you were here a few Sunday nights ago, that the leadership doesn't do the work of the ministry. We perfect the saints so they can do the work of the ministry, Ephesians 4:11. The ministry is yours; ours is to pray and teach sound doctrine. You are to do the work of the ministry. And we'll show you how it works.

Now, there's one verse, let me just give it to you very quickly. Hebrews 13:17. Listen to this. Here's your first general duty as a congregation. Here it comes. "Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves." Now, this is not to be burdensome. But assuming that the leadership of the church is Spirit-filled and Spirit-directed. We are to be obedient, because they are directly connected with God and ministering in the behalf of Christ as under-shepherds, and we are subjecting ourselves to their ministry, knowing it's a godly ministry. We may not understand it. We may disagree with what they're attempting to do, but it is our place to obey. That's what keeps the order of the church a living testimony to the world.

There are a lot of things that can rot a church and really mess up its testimony. One of them, primary one, is lousy leadership. False teachers. Those who fail to teach doctrine. Churches built on peanuts and popcorn instead of the Word of God. Another thing that fouls up a church is a congregation that won't follow its leadership. And thus, it splits, and cracks, and fractures, and everything else. And it comes all out in front of the world. Everybody has to fall into the category of the design of the Spirit and be faithful and obedient.

All right, so, first of all, the general duty, "Obey them that have the rule over you. Submit yourselves." And our duty is to give you instruction in love, and we're answerable to God if we fail. "For they watch for your soul." You see, you have to realize that you're the burden of our lives. There are lot of easier things to do than to rule in the church of Christ and to care about spiritual problems. You can't leave them. You know, you're with them 24 hours a day, 10 days a week. There's no end. We "watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief, for that's unprofitable for you." We can't labor as leaders in grief; we do it in joy. We have to care for you and answer to God for it, and yours is to submit to those who lead.

All right, now let's look specifically at the duties for a few minutes. The duty of a man in the church, what is the man's responsibility in the meeting of the local assembly? First Timothy 5:8, and I'm just going to read these to you and let the Spirit of God teach you. First Timothy 5:8. Here's a basic indication for a man's responsibility in the church. Man is obviously implied, as we'll see by the pronoun. "But if any provide not for his own," here it's talking about his parents, his widowed mother, or his wife and children, the whole shot. "If any provide not for his own," and may I add it's also talking about anybody for whom you're responsible, even if they're not related. "And especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel." Why? Because the faith of Christ is built on love. It is built on being responsible and being faithful to do your duty. And if you can't even show the world that you are faithful to do your duty and show love to your own family by getting out and providing for your family, you are denying the very basis of what the faith is all about. Now, I realize there are times when men don't have a job, and when they get laid off and this and that and the other. But God expects a Christian man in the fellowship of the church to work to provide for his family. Not to be on welfare, unless he has some kind of a physical incapacity, and then the church should care for him. Not to be really supported by the working wife, and we'll get to her in a minute, but to provide for his family, or he is one denying the very principle of the faith, which is love and responsibility, and doing your duty.

Then, in chapter 6 verse 1, this talks about another angle. If you do have a job, this refers to you. "Let as many servants," we'll call them employees, "as are under the yoke," in other words you're working for a boss, "count their own masters worthy of all honor. Serve your master and honor him." Whoever your employer is, serve him and honor him. Now, watch this one. "That the name of God and His doctrine be not blasphemed." Again, a poor testimony at your job is disobedience to your obligation to the church of Jesus Christ. You need to serve your employer with giving him honor; whether he deserves it or not isn't the issue. It's a matter of obedience for the sake of your testimony and the sake of the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Verse 2, you say, "Oh, I got it made, man, I got a Christian boss." And watch this one, verse 2, "And they that have believing masters," Christian boss, "let them not despise them because they are brethren." That means if you got a Christian boss, that doesn't mean you can goof off. That doesn't mean you can slop around, because he's a Christian and he's in the church, and, you know, no. But watch this. "But rather do them service, because they're faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit." In other words, if you've got a Christian boss, that doesn't mean you slop it up. That means you work all the more diligently, not taking advantage.

Now, you say, "Is this important?" Sure, look at the end of verse 2. "These things teach and exhort." And I'm doing it. We need to be faithful to our employer to honor him for the sake of our testimony. If we work for a Christian, we are to honor him even more so because he's faithful to Christ.

All right, there's some more duties of men. Titus 2:9, very quick. We'll be done with you in a minute, men; and we'll get to the women, and you'll love every word of it. Titus 2:9, it says, "Exhort servants or employees to be obedient unto their own masters, to please them well in all things, not answering again." No backtalk to your employer. None at all. A godly testimony is of the essence. "Not purloining." That's pilfering, stealing out of the cash register. "But showing all good fidelity or honesty, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things." You know, when you live a godly life in front of your employer, you actually add virtue to virtue. The doctrine of God looks beautiful, but when you live a beautiful life, you actually hang adornment on the doctrine of God. Your employer may believe in God, but when he sees your godly life, God even becomes more beautiful to him, because he can see Him manifest in your life. And so, we are to adorn the doctrine of God. What a beautiful thought that is. Then, men, on another angle, we saw that we are to teach, right there in Titus 2:2, it tells us. "Aged men, sober-minded, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience." In 2 Timothy 2:2, it tells us to teach sound doctrine, and here's a good opportunity for us to recognize it is older men in the church. You're able to teach younger men. We are to be sober-minded, serious, dignified, knowing our priorities, self-controlled, strong, sound in faith, love, and patience.

And those three things are really important. Faith, love, patience. Faith is an attitude toward God. Love is an attitude toward men, and patience is an attitude toward trouble. And we are to be sound in all of them. And so, we're to be, really, almost the same characteristics and those of a deacon.

Then, another thing he says about young men, down in verse 6, young men, this is teenagers, boys, young men, "Young men, likewise, exhort to be sober-minded." That means self-controlled, serious enough to know what matters. And verse 7, "In all things show yourself a pattern of good works." And even young men should know doctrine. He says, "In doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity," that's dignity, "seriousness, and sincerity." Then, in verse 8, "Sound speech." It's easy for young men to talk talk that isn't worth saying. And so, he says, "Your speech should be considered carefully. You should be sincere. You should be dignified. Your doctrine should be uncorrupt. You should be a pattern of good works." Young men, we are to be patterns of what God's standards are. Paul told Timothy to show himself an example to the believers.

So, there you have the duty of a man. He's to provide for his family or he's worse than one who denies the faith. He's to teach others who can teach others, also. He is to be faithful in terms of obedience in his job to his employer; and if his employer's Christian, he's to be more faithful, if that's possible. He is also to be serious, sober-minded, in faith and love and patience. He's to be sound and solid. Young men, we are to be patterns of the believer to everybody. We are to live a God-like life. And we are to be uncorrupted in our doctrine, serious, sincere, and our speech should be that which edifies.

Well, we could say more. We won't. Quickly, the duty of women. What is it that a woman is to do in the church? First Timothy 2:9, and here we come to the clothing and the apparel of a woman. You say, "Why is that there?" Because God wanted you to know it, basically. It wasn't put there to deal with the 20th century issue. It was put there because this is the pattern. All right, 1 Timothy 2:9, "In like manner also, that women," coincidentally, let me back up. In verse 8, tells one more thing about men. It says "Men should pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting." Men are to be in constant prayer. Then, it says in verse 9, men, the pattern of men is to come together in prayer. Women likewise. Here's what they're to be aware of. It's easy for men to just be busy fiddling around and so on and so on. They need to be concentrating on prayer. Women need to be preparing themselves in a physical way. "In like manner, women adorn themselves in modest apparel." Now, that's a pretty simple statement. I believe that that's the basic principle of the Word of God in terms of the dress of believers. When we come together for fellowship, we are to be modest.

Now, I, people say to me, "Do you think this kind of thing? Do you like this, the long with the split? Do you like the short with the thing? Do you like the pant with the thing?" Don't ask me that; I don't know what's what. And everything changes so fast. The issue is modesty. The Bible doesn't say, "There is a three-inch knee rule." No. But some things are pretty obvious. Some are modest. Some are immodest. For believers, and that doesn't mean if you bring your unsaved friend to the church and you come to hear the gospel, and we have a little coterie of guards out there. "Sorry, lady, you'll have to sit in the bus till the service is over. Your dress is not fitting." No. That's not the idea. This is for believers. Modest apparel with godly fear. You know what that literally means in the Greek? With a sense of shame. You know, this whole modern deal about, "We don't need to be ashamed of our bodies." I'm sorry, friends, that ever since sin came into the Garden, we have a right to be ashamed for the corruptness of our body. It's corrupted by sin. The flesh is sensitive to sin. And Paul says, "We need to even have, as ladies, a sense of not," this is not some kind of an extreme psychological traumatic thing, "but just enough sense of shame to be modest." And that's important. The idea of sobriety there is to avoid extremes. I mean, there's no place in the church for somebody's apparel to be designed to show off. That's not the point. That's a distraction to what we're trying to do, and what the Spirit of God wants to do, when we're distracted by somebody's apparel. We're to have modest apparel with godly fear and sobriety. We avoid extremes. Not immoral clothes or clothes which show off. Not, this one's kind of interesting, not with braided hair. Not with braided, it probably says broided or plaited or something like that, braided hair, or gold or pearls, or costly array.

Now, in Paul's day, they had popular styles of braiding their hair, from what we understand, and winding it all around. And they wound in it all kinds of pearls and gold. Well, you can imagine some poor guy sitting together with the rest of the believers, and some lady plops down in front of him with a whole treasure chest on her head. And it was hopeless. The guy would be sitting there thinking, "Boy, I'll be that pearl's worth 89 drachma. That one over there, boy, that's a, look at the size of that baby over there." And, you know. And the whole concept of what he was there to do was lost. There was no way that he was going to get the message sitting behind that particular display, and being

preoccupied with some woman who came in there in vanity to display all of her glories publicly. And I mean, they spent fortunes. It is said that some people had upwards of $10,000.00 worth of stuff on their head. Well, of course, that's the extreme situation. And that's what he's talking about. I don't think if you want to wear, you know, a set of Woolworth pearls, nobody's going to give you a big hassle about that. Man, if you've got a couple of $2.00 earrings on your ear, that's no big deal. I mean we're not trying to be ridiculous. What we're saying is: there's no place for this showy display, a flaunting of treasures in front of the people who are here to worship God and to share in the Word of God. We are here modestly attired in order to give off no vibrations that distract from what God wants to do through His Holy Spirit and the Word.

And so, women are to be very careful how they dress. Very modestly. That's the question, and that's the answer. And not with hair that is a distraction. Now, it's a worst distraction if you come in here and your head looks like it was combed in an egg beater. That's distracting, very distracting. That's more distracting than if you did something with it. But there is a balance, obviously, and it's fine if you want to look, if you want to wear something that's modest in terms of jewelry. That's not the point. The point is: when you go into the extravagant, it becomes distracting.

In verse 10, and here's the positive end of it. "But which becometh women professing godliness with good works." I mean if you're a godly woman, you're certainly going to look like somebody who cares about godly things, not somebody who cares about showing off. A godly person isn't concerned about himself being on display. And then, verse 11 tells us something else about women when they come together. "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection." In the public service, the women are not to speak. That's the standard. Now, women are to teach in private times and instruct. We'll see that in a moment. But not in the public service. They are not to teach. You say, "Do you believe in women preachers?" No, period, paragraph, no. That's exactly what that verse is talking about. "Women are to learn in silence with all subjection." Twelve, more specific, "But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." There's no such thing, biblically, as women preachers. None. There is no such thing. And so, we see the duty of a woman, then, in the display of the service is to be modest and silent.

There are some other things that women are to do. Quickly, Titus 2, and we'll just wrap up with this. Titus 2 verse 3. "The aged women," and this, of course, is the older ladies. Aged doesn't necessarily mean you're decrepit. It just means that you're mature. And you can write down on your paper whether this applies to you or not. And no looking around to see who's writing. Verse 3, "The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness," so important, "not false accusers." You know what that word in the Greek is? Scandalmongers. It's very easy sometimes for older people who have not so much to preoccupy themselves with, and even in this day, they had the problem, and the phone wasn't invented. It's very easy for older people to get caught up in talking about all the things that are going on. And without even realizing it sometimes, and other times with realizing it, starting something that becomes a real problem and a real scandal. More churches have been split

by this than any other single thing that I can think of, and that's just exactly what we're trying to avoid in the unity of this assembly. And so, "the women are to be concerned that they be not false accusers, scandalmongers." But they are to behave holy. "Not given to much wine." And this is good.

You say, "Can a woman teach?" What's the next phrase? What is it? Verse 3, the last phrase. "Teachers of good things." Of course they're to be teachers, but not in the public service. Teachers of good things. Verse 4, "That they may teach the young women." You say, "Oh, we can't seem to do anything about the girls around here." Sometimes people come to me, "Did you see the dress on that girl?" Well, my friends, you know, that's not my area. I will do what I can. Our leadership will do what it can. The point is this, the older women teach the young one. If you see a young girl that you feel is immodest or needs spiritual counsel, that's your responsibility. People come to me incessantly, friends, and I mean this. Week in, week out, "Pastor, what you going to do about this?" You know what I say? "Dear member, nothing. That is not my ministry. I will do what I can in the areas where God convicts me. If I see a need of an individual, I'll go to them. But if God lays somebody on your heart that needs some assistance, that's your responsibility." You can't expect one or two people to do everything with everybody. If you feel there's some young girl who needs some assistance and love, and some kind encouragement and instruction, my, your obligation before God is to go to that person. Why do you think the Spirit of God let you be aware of that? That's what ministering to each other is all about.

And I appreciate the fact that some of you do this. This is great. You have that responsibility in love to give guidance to the younger women and to set the pattern, the example. And here's what you're supposed to teach them. This is good. "Teach them to be sober-minded," and I like this one, "to love their husbands, to love their children." Now watch this, "to be discreet, live a pure life, chaste," now watch this one, "keepers," where? "At home, keepers at home." You say, "You mean younger women are supposed to stay home?" That's what it says. And then, oh, this next one's great. Oh, boy, it's good. "Good and obedient to their own husbands." The pastor's not responsible to run around and teach everybody everything. That's your responsibility as God directs if He lays it on your heart somebody.

What are you going to teach the young women? All right, let's go over it again. "Sober-minded, love their husbands, love their children, discreet, chaste, keepers at home." Oh, so many young women wonder why their children are hard to discipline and why they've got problems, and the problem is they're never home with them. They're never home with them to teach them principles that are spiritual and basic to their own life patterns. And then, "To be good." To be good. That's kindness. That's the beneficent goodness. "To be obedient to their own husbands." Why? "That the Word of God be not blasphemed." My friend, your individual conduct determines the testimony of Jesus Christ in the world. Do you know that? Well, and then he goes on to talk about some general duties, such as praying, and teaching, and ministering, and giving, and sharing, and preaching the gospel. And you can study those on your own.

Father, we thank You that You've taught us this morning. Lord, help us to do something about these principles. For Your glory, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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