

## Redemption Hill Church

June 24, 2012

Titus 1.5-9

“This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you—if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.”

### 1. Introduction

- a. Story about leaders eating cookies
  - i. Mark 10.45, "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
- b. Proposition: Church leadership is essential and in all appearances it should reflect Christ
  - i. Note: Though we want to give this passage full authority on its own, we must also not read it in a vacuum apart from 1 Timothy 3.1-8, and will refer to this along the way as necessary.

### 2. Importance of Elders (v.5a)

- a. A church without elders is incomplete; cf. v.5a, "This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order"

### 3. Installation of Elders (v.5b)

- a. Elders are appointed
  - i. Elders cannot simply place themselves in authority over a body of believers
    1. Criteria for selecting them is well-established, not willy-nilly (i.e. "as I directed you")
  - ii. Appears to say Titus appointed in isolation, but other NT passages indicate that congregations take part in the installation of their leadership; cf. Acts 6.1-4
    1. Moreover, the congregation—and not Titus—will know best the men around them who meet these criterion
    2. Finally, no standards for choosing new Titus' are given in the NT, yet congregations have Titus 1 and 1 Timothy 3 as a blueprint for choosing elders from among themselves to perpetuate the ministry

- b. Elders are in plurality
    - i. Elders here is in the plural, and though we may imagine ways in which this could be used and still allow for a single elder interpretation, there is no convincing reason to do this
      - 1. Moreover, the models of elders we see in Scripture—namely the Jerusalem elders—exist in a plurality
4. Qualifications for Elders
- a. General reputation (v.6)
    - i. Above reproach
      - 1. “One who is marked by no disgrace that would lessen his authority.” (Calvin)
      - 2. The necessity to live above reproach for elders of the church is an issue of protecting the gospel. If bad word surrounds an elder—deserved or not—that ill-repute will find its way to affecting the gospel as well. Criticism against elders runs deep to the heart of the message they claim to represent.
    - ii. Husband of one wife
      - 1. ...One wife
        - a. Singular spousal commitment. Not someone whose marital relationship has been compromised by unfaithfulness
      - 2. Husband of..
        - a. The grammar of the original language leaves no doubt that this is a criteria being placed on men. If Paul didn't mean to exclude female leadership then it seems odd he wouldn't have extended this criteria to them as well.
      - 3. Additional
        - a. This criteria doesn't require that an elder be married but it also makes clear that marriage is not prohibited
    - iii. Children are faithful
      - 1. It is not necessary to read this as a direct requirement that his children are believers. The Greek reads "children have faith," which is ambiguous. Yet, we may use a parallel passage to help us
        - a. 1 Timothy 3.4-5, "He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?"
      - 2. This seems to clarify for us that the necessity is not for the children to be believers, but that they be faithful in obedience to their father's leadership. The father who has not demonstrated that he

can manage affairs properly in his own household is not to be trusted in managing the household of God.

b. Specifically what he is not (v.7)

i. Not arrogant

1. The man who is arrogant thinks more of himself than of other, is more likely to speak in ways that increase his fame and not God's

ii. Not quick tempered

1. Nothing turns people off more than a man who cannot control his temper. The work of an elder is stressful and by nature somewhat confrontational, so if a man is quick to be offended he will constantly fail in this position.

iii. Not a drunkard

1. This is not a prohibition of drinking, but a call to exercise control

iv. Not violent

1. Going even further than quick tempered is the restriction against a man who is violent, quick to get in fights.

v. Not greedy for gain

1. Refer also to 1 Peter 5.2, "shepherd the flock of God that is among you . . . not for shameful gain, but eagerly." It is a sign of the pervasiveness of sin that men would treat the call to compassion and instruction in the holy word as just another way to make money.

c. Specifically what he is (vv.8-9)

1. Paul is not just repeating himself but he is showing that it is not enough to NOT be something—the man must be fulfilling the desired behaviors as well.

ii. Hospitable

iii. A lover of good

iv. Self-controlled

v. Upright

vi. Holy

vii. Disciplined

viii. Holding firm to Scripture

- a. This declares implicitly that there is such a thing as "sound doctrine"
- b. Moreover, he must hold firm to this, meaning he must not be suspect to scratching the itchy ears of sinful men, cf. 2 Timothy 4.3, "For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will

accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions.”

2. Able to give instruction

- a. It does no good for an elder to have knowledge of the Scripture without being able to share it. Part of the task of a shepherd is the training of his sheep, and in the church this is done through instruction in the word.

3. Able to rebuke false teachers

- a. Moreover, as Paul warned the Ephesian elders, there will be wolves that enter the flock, attempting to draw away disciples after themselves. An elder must not be afraid to confront these wolves and run them off.

5. Conclusion

- a. We started this look at elders by focusing on Jesus, it is only appropriate to end it by looking at Jesus.
  - i. John 21.15-17, “When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ He said to him, ‘Feed my lambs.’ He said to him a second time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ He said to him, ‘Tend my sheep.’ He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’ Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, ‘Do you love me?’ and he said to him, ‘Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.’” Jesus said to him, ‘Feed my sheep.’”
  - ii. Peter is leading the sheep, but the sheep he is leading are not his own. Ultimately, the elder is caring for Jesus’ sheep and is doing so because of his love for Jesus. We can look over the criteria, but the highest criterion is the elder’s heart. The elder must love Christ and must desire to live like Christ—to serve and not to be served.
  - iii. Call to Response: “Being called to be an elder is an amazing blessing, but even more important than that is the call to be a child of God....”