

# Titus 1:4-6

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Date: 16 October 2022

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Well, good morning, everyone. It's a great and beautiful day, isn't it? Anybody have any great plans this weekend? They enjoyed the weather? We had a big birthday celebration for David.

He's not quite there yet, but we celebrated a little early. He's turning 13 years old, which is kind of a big deal out of it. What does 13 kind of symbolize a lot of times, especially for young men?

Trouble. Oh, boy. Okay. Becoming a man. Becoming a man, yeah.

So we make a big deal out of that. We had a lot of friends and family over and used that as an opportunity to celebrate that special age and then also have a commission towards manhood and taking that on and taking that seriously.

So it was a good time. Anybody notice anything different? In the sanctuary here? Yeah, a little bit, huh? Yeah, it is brighter.

[ 1 : 0 6 ] A lot of people have made that comment. And I guess maybe it's some of the paint colors and maybe the flooring, curtains. You'll notice that there is no more green. So if green is your favorite color, I'm sorry.

But I guess we have some plants that we still maintain the green. But thank you to all the people who are involved in putting all this together. So many people, especially the Gannons.

We were here almost pretty much every day last week overseeing this. I know Susie helped with the painting back there. Lots of people. Roger, both Rogers.

Roger 1 and Roger 2. You guys get to decide which one's number 1 and 2. With some of the painting and the things that we did to the walls, you'll notice that there's no more dividers.

So if we ever want to divide the room, we're just out of luck. But we decided those room dividers should go. But thanks to everyone who helped out.

[ 2 : 1 2 ] Also with the sound, we had to unhook all the sound. Keith and Bruce helped out with that and then putting it back together. And I'm kind of shocked that everything seems to be working. All the sound things are working.

But if something goes wrong, I wouldn't be surprised. So anyway, thanks to everybody for that. It really looks good. All right, some announcements here.

Okay, first thing that I can think of. I shared this little bulletin insert last week, I guess it was, for parents of young children.

We just want to make sure, especially if there's anybody new, that they're familiar kind of with how we treat children here at Grace Bible Church. And we've been to churches, Jamie and I, where we take the kids in, and then somebody's like guarding the door to make sure that kids can't get in in the sanctuary.

They've got to go to the nursery or to some other kids program. And we do have a children's church program here after the singing. In fact, we'll dismiss here in just a bit for those who want to use that.

- [ 3 : 20 ] But we just want to make sure that parents are comfortable with their kids in the service, both for the singing time and if they want to, if they decide to, even afterwards. But one thing I forgot, which Abby, who helped put this together, pointed out, is very important.
- On the back, on the back is some space for drawing and writing, you know, a little bit of notes. So, you know, sometimes I know we've had this. We have little ones that it's hard to keep their attention.
- So they need something to draw with. And we'll have these bulletins, but a lot of times they just don't have very much white space on them. So how are you going to draw a pony on a bulletin like this when there's not enough white space, right?
- So we have a little section on the back here. And now you can draw on that. So I wanted to point that out. Let's see. Another announcement here.
- So this one is from Pastor Marv. So now for years, we've been here for almost six years, and almost every single week there's some new handout, printout from a magazine or whatever, out in the back.
- [ 4 : 29 ] And every week I look forward to see what's there. Anybody else look forward to see what's in there? Very informative, great. Pastor Marv always says, information, right? We need good information. And so he provided this printout.
- This is about the elections coming up and just information about policies and platforms. So Pastor Marv is always big on making sure everybody gets out and vote.
- So take advantage of that. That's out in the back. And then let's see. A few things I wanted to point out in the bulletin.
- So I won't go over everything on the bulletin here. But the first one, so we've got just underneath the coffee break section here. So we have coffee provided, and we've got snacks.
- But we want to be careful with our new carpet. And so we would like to ask, if you drink coffee, you'll notice that there's a difference, right, between the flooring and the front and the back.
- [ 5 : 37 ] In the back, it's this nice, what do you call it, vinyl planks, right, vinyl. And so you can spill all kinds of things on there, and you just mop it right up. But the carpet's not as forgiving.
- It's actually a pretty good carpet. It will, you know, it won't hold stains a lot, but it definitely will, especially with things like coffee or juice or things like that.
- So if you could keep those kinds of things to the back of the room, if you're sitting back there, you luck out. You get to have your coffee with you. But water, of course, is fine. And, by the way, if anybody does spill anything, that's okay.
- Everybody spills things. I tell my kids that all the time. Things happen. Accidents happen. But if you just let somebody know so that we can take care of it, that would be great. Let's see.
- The other thing I wanted to point out, we've got a family night coming up this Tuesday, this Tuesday night. So bring a snack to share, and we'll have a good time. Some of the families with young kids this week.
- [ 6 : 36 ] And I think that's it. You can see what other things are on the calendar for this week and the coming month. Oh, I did. We forgot.
- We were going to, the elders need to get together, and we need to pick a date for the Christmas cantata. So we are working. We just had our first rehearsal this last Wednesday for the Christmas program.
- We're calling it, I guess it's called a cantata. I don't know what that means. Does anybody know what a cantata means? Anyway, it's a special service for Christmas with all kinds of music.

We've got to figure out a date. So maybe after, if the elders would stay after church and we can just do a little powwow to figure out a date. We're, I think, right now looking at either the week before Christmas or maybe two weeks before Christmas.

So probably one of those two dates. So we'll talk about that. Before we dismiss the kids, any other final announcements from the congregation? Yes, Tanya.

[ 7 : 34 ] What? Sophie's birthday. Sophie's birthday. Sophie's birthday. Sophie's birthday. What? Sophie's birthday. Well, I think we might have to sing happy birthday.

We'll go ahead and sing to both. All right? Happy birthday to you. Happy birthday to you.

Happy birthday, dear Sophie and David. Happy birthday to you. All right. All right. Man, becoming a teenager is a big deal.

It's a big deal, isn't it? By the way, thank you to Sophie for playing the piano this morning. Was that amazing? Yes.

So Steve's out and Sophie was more than ready to fill in for him this week and next week. Is that right? Okay. So that was wonderful. All right.

[ 8 : 34 ] I think that's going to be it. So if any kids who want to go to Children's Church, you can be dismissed right now. And we'll get started back in Titus. Joyce, are you going to?

Well, we started just last week in the book of Timothy. So if you've got a Bible and you want to open up to Timothy, sorry, I said Timothy, Titus, those two T names, they're right next to each other.

So if you went to Timothy, you're almost there. Titus is a short book. I thought, well, for my first verse-by-verse series, I'll pick something short.

But we talked a little bit last week about a lot of context about Titus and who he was and how important he was in this transition period between this period of law with Israel and this period of grace, which Paul introduced.

And Titus was this special test case when there was this great convention, this great meeting of the minds right in the middle of the book of Acts, in Acts chapter 15, where there was this debate.

[ 9 : 48 ] Well, these new Gentile believers, which was kind of a shocking idea to many Jews, the Gentiles are becoming believers. Now, Gentiles in the past had become believers, but what did they have to do to become a believer, to become a child of God?

What did they have to do? Well, you basically had to become a Jew. You had to do the Jewish things. And the big thing was what? Circumcision.

So if you want to be a part of the Jew, if you want to be a part of the Jewish family, you had to become circumcised. And so that was the big debate. And there was this council, as they call it, in Acts 15.

And ultimately, Paul walked away, and he had a test. He said, I'm going to bring Titus with me. And Titus is not circumcised. He's a full-fledged Greek. No Jewish blood in him at all.

At least as far as we know, that's fairly certain that he had no Jewish blood in him at all. And so he was not circumcised. And so the test case is, we're going to go, we're going to have this meeting, and if Titus can walk away unscathed, then we succeeded.

[ 11 : 04 ] And it was agreed. All the apostles, the original apostles there and leaders in Jerusalem said, we agree. These Gentiles who are coming to the Lord, you shared with us, Paul, your message that you have from the Lord.

We agree that it's from the Lord. And we agree that these Gentiles do not need to be circumcised or keep the law. They had a few things that they requested, but other than that, no keeping of the law.

So it was a big deal. That's a big deal we see throughout Paul's epistles. We only got a few verses in. So what I'm going to do is we'll start with just reading from the beginning, and we're going to read to, let's see, we'll go to verse 9.

Paul, a bondservant of God and apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, in the acknowledgement of the truth which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began, but has in due time manifested his word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior.

To Titus, a true son in our common faith, grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.

[ 12 : 23 ] I'll go ahead and stop there and just review a couple of things. One of the things that came up after the service last week was Paul in verse 2 speaks of this hope of eternal life which God promised.

There's this hope that we have of having eternal life. We get to, if we trust in him, we get to live forever, which is tremendous.

But this word hope sometimes causes confusion. Because, well, is this eternal life, this gift that's available to us, is this something that we just hope for, kind of wishful thinking?

Is that what it is? Is that what Paul is talking about? No, not at all. Well, eternal life is something to a certain degree we have now. We have life with Christ, with God now.

But when it comes to the future, we will have eternal life on into the future. And really, when we get our new bodies at the resurrection, we will have immortality, eternal life in a physical sense as well.

[ 13 : 31 ] But that word hope is something that can be confusing because the word hope is something that we've kind of changed the definition of today. The word hope, a lot of times we use, well, I really hope it doesn't rain today.

Anybody ever said that? Sure, we've all said that because that's a typical way we use hope. But that's not the way the Bible uses the word hope ever. The word hope is always an expectation, a confident expectation, really a faith.

The only difference between faith and hope is not the confidence in what we're believing in, but in whether it's now or whether it's in the future. So hope is a kind of faith that we have for something that is coming in the future.

So that's what hope is. So our hope of eternal life, what Paul talks about here, the hope of eternal life, we know we have eternal life, but it won't be completely accomplished until the future.

So that's what hope means. So I wanted to make that clear. In verse, let's see, in verse, back to verse 3, he has in due time manifested his word through preaching.

[ 14 : 40 ] Now that's an interesting thing. He's manifested his word through the preaching of the gospel. Everybody say hi. These are our friends.

We just saw last night at the birthday. You got lost, huh? Well, I'm glad you made it. Ted and Grace. Thanks so much for... It was Grace's fault. He's throwing her under the bus.

So now I'm all distracted, Ted. Titus, the book of Titus. Open your Bibles. We brought a Bible, right? All right.

This is a Bible church. So the... What does it say? He has in due time manifested his word through preaching.

Through preaching. So preaching is how we get the word out. Now, it's kind of common. You know, we are called to spread the gospel, each one of us. Not just the professional people, not just the preachers or whatever, the pastors.

[ 15 : 42 ] But each one of us. And some kind of have this idea, well, if I just live a good Christian life, people will see the kind of...the way that I live, and then they'll know about the hope that I have.

And is it true that we ought to live good Christian lives? Absolutely, we ought to. But people don't get the word. They don't understand the gospel just through looking at how we live our lives.

Now, our lives are a testimony to the truth of that word, and we can undermine that testimony by not living as we ought. But we actually have to, with our words, speak the truth of the gospel.

And what is the gospel? It's the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus died for your sins. For my sins, for your sins, for the sins of every person outside this building.

He died for our sins. That is the gospel, and that's what people need to know and what we need to share with them. So, through the preaching of the gospel, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God, our Savior.

[ 16 : 59 ] And so, one thing I'd like to point out here with Paul, Paul says, this was a message committed to me. And so, one of the things that we point out is that Paul has this special apostleship.

Paul was called the apostle to, anybody remember? The Gentiles. Paul had this commission from God. As soon as he was brought to the Lord, the Lord appeared to him on his way to Damascus.

He said, I have sent you to be a light to the Gentiles. And he says this, Paul says this in 1 Timothy 1.16.

He says, however, for this reason, I obtain mercy, that in me first, that in me first, Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering as a pattern to those who are going to believe on him for everlasting life.

God showed grace to Paul. He showed grace to Paul, and Paul was to be an example. But he says to me first, now that's confusing to a lot of people, what does it mean first?

[ 18 : 09 ] Hasn't God shown grace throughout all of history? He has. But in time past, and Paul explains this in other letters, there was this element of the law involved, with all the Jews especially.

And so there was the law included. So there was God's favor or grace, but also the law. You have to keep the law. And if you don't keep the law, what would happen if you were a Jew and you didn't keep the law?

The Bible says you would be cut off from the people of God. But there was a change, something new happening here with the ministry of Paul, that in me first, Christ might show all longsuffering as a pattern to those who are going to believe on him for everlasting life.

Let's also turn to Ephesians chapter 3 and look at another time here, Paul talks about his ministry and what God gave him as a commission to do.

Ephesians chapter 3. Galatians, Ephesians. Anybody know how to remember the order of those books? There's all kinds of different little word things.

[ 19 : 21 ] Now, John Jordan gave me my favorite. It's girls eat potato chips. Girls eat potato chips. Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians.

But good evangelists preach Christ. Has anybody ever heard that one? Good evangelists preach Christ. So there's different ways you can remember what order that they're in. But Galatians, then Ephesians.

Ephesians chapter 3. And Paul says this, For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you.

And so that word dispensation is a funny word. It's not something that we use in everyday language typically. But it's just a word that means an administration. An administration. There used to be an administration of the law.

A time where the law kind of ruled over everything. That was how people operated under the law. But now there's this new dispensation, this new administration, which Paul is bringing in called the dispensation or the administration of the grace of God.

[ 20 : 27 ] And so I just wanted to point that out here in Titus. He says that the preaching of this word was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior.

Let's continue on in verse 4. To Titus, a true son in our common faith. Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.

So Paul calls Titus a son. Is Titus his biological son? No, not at all. In fact, as far as we know, Paul didn't have any children. There's no indication in the Bible that he had any, excuse me, biological children.

But he doesn't just call him a son. He says a true son in our common faith. And so we have biological children. We're all familiar with that. But it is possible for there to be spiritual sons, spiritual daughters, spiritual fathers, and spiritual mothers.

And these are people, these are relationships in which we provide fatherly or motherly care for people in a spiritual sense, in the faith.

[ 21 : 36 ] And that was the relationship here between Paul and Titus. And that's not just something that can happen between an apostle and one of his co-laborers. That can happen among any people.

And so there might be people. In fact, I know of, there are people that I've met who've gone to this church in the past who consider certain people in this church or who've, in one, I think, Dave Weinbrenner, I can think of a friend that I have who said that he was kind of like a spiritual father to him, a mentor.

And so lots of people have this kind of relationship in their life. And you know, who is the best person to be a spiritual father to a young man or a woman?

Yeah, your biological father, right? That's the best person. And as fathers and as mothers, we ought to be, as much as we can, that both, not just a biological father and mother, but also a spiritual father and mother.

But there are many people who, whether they didn't grow up with a father or a mother, or maybe their mother or father were kind of checked out or not really interested in the faith, didn't really have that growing up.

[ 22 : 54 ] And so there are opportunities for all of us to be that kind of a person in another person's life. And I think we should look for those opportunities. He uses this greeting, grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Grace, mercy, and peace. Usually, Paul uses two words. He says grace and peace. That's a very common greeting. You see it, I think, a dozen times in Paul's letters. This time he adds the word mercy.

And why would you say that? Well, I like to think this is the apostle of grace. Grace, and so he is saying grace be with you.

God's mercy be with you. God's peace be with you. And I think it's contrasting these words with the opposites kind of helps us see the impact of it.

And so what is the opposite of grace? That might be hard. People might not really know. Well, grace kind of means favor. But in this context, especially the context of the New Testament, grace is always compared and contrasted with the law.

[ 24 : 00 ] You have the law where you work for your wages, and then you have grace where you receive a free gift. Those are very different things. And so he could have said law be with you or law to you, but he didn't say that.

He said grace to you. And then he says mercy. What's the opposite of mercy? Well, the word that I think of is vengeance. Vengeance.

You can have mercy on somebody or you can take vengeance. And then peace. Peace. We have peace with God. For those of us who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Bible says multiple times we have peace with God.

What's the opposite of peace? War or wrath. The Bible uses the term wrath. And the Bible does say that the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness in this world.

And so God is a wrathful God, and that is appropriate. But for those of us who have trusted in Jesus Christ, we have peace with him. Peace, not just now, not just for a moment, but forever, for eternity.

[ 25 : 09 ] And so we can contrast grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, to the opposite, which would be law, vengeance, and wrath from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

That's a very stark difference, isn't it? So when we come to God, when we come to the Lord, whether it's in our Christian life, then we can come to him knowing that we have favor, we have grace.

He's given us a free gift through his son Jesus Christ. We have mercy, and we have peace. And so we don't have to fear when we come to God. Even if we've screwed up.

Anybody ever screwed up before? Yeah, just a couple of you, okay. Yeah, we do, even as Christians. And we shouldn't, right? Any sin that we have in our life is a tragedy, and we should treat it as such.

We should never be flippant about sin in our lives. But we fail as Christians at times, and we shouldn't.

[ 26 : 15 ] But we can always go to him, and we don't have to worry that he's going to just treat us or respond to us with anger and vengeance. Because today, because we trust in Jesus Christ and his blood, we have peace.

We have peace with him. And we can come to him as our Abba Father, as it says in Romans. Paul continues on after his greeting here.

For this reason, so he's starting to give instructions. I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you. So Paul had been to Crete.

We just mentioned last week. There's no indication in the book of Acts of him going to Crete. So this may have been after the period of the book of Acts that he went there. But he left behind his co-laborer, Titus, to set things in order.

So he made converts. He introduced people to the gospel and got people to believe, as he did in many other places in his missionary journeys. But he wanted to not just leave people with the gospel and then run.

[ 27 : 25 ] He wanted to set things in order and develop what we call today a local church. Or because Crete was a larger area, he mentions cities, set elders in cities.

So probably multiple churches. But that you set in order the things that are lacking. So he said, now I shared the gospel with people. Many people came to the faith. But there are still some things that are lacking.

That's not enough. When we bring people to the faith, we need to get them disciplined. They need to learn how to live the Christian life, receive encouragement, and sometimes exhortation and admonishment, and those kinds of things.

And so God has established the church as this body of believers. And we have the universal church as a whole. And we have these little local churches that represent the greater church, the body of Christ.

And so Paul is instructing Titus here, we need to set things in order to establish this church. So churches should be orderly things.

[ 28 : 35 ] They should be things that are set in order. And that's the way it is with any organization, is it not? If you have an organization, like let's say a business, without leadership or kind of rules or a mission statement or things like that, are you going to get anything done?

You'll get nothing done. Nothing will happen. And so setting things in order means establishing leaders, setting up knowing what your responsibilities, knowing doctrinal commitments.

This is important for a church to know what are the kinds of things that we are going to teach. And that's a big part of what Paul teaches or gives instructions and commands Timothy about. We have, in the past, our family has been part of at least one house church.

And I guess, I think we visited other house churches. And house churches is just a church that meets in people's homes. But there's a whole house church movement out there. And so we got to experience some of it.

There are like larger churches. There's one in Xenia, one in Dayton. There's one in Columbus that I know of. They have lots of people, but they are kind of focused on their members, not just meeting on Sunday mornings in a big assembly, but also people meeting at homes.

[ 29 : 48 ] They find that to be valuable and important. And that can have tremendous value. I know we have found value in that, in a more kind of homey setting, being able to fellowship with believers and talk to one another and encourage each other in the faith.

But there is a stream of a house church movement where there's this kind of idea, well, there shouldn't really be any kind of leadership in a house church. Everybody should just be kind of, just kind of go with the flow.

Go as the Spirit leads, maybe, or something like that. And so a lot of what they get this from is from 1 Corinthians 12 and 13 and 14, I guess.

Because there's some instructions that seem to maybe indicate that there. And we won't get into looking at that. But what I found in seeing churches try to operate this way is that it kind of flails.

There's not really a lot of robust teaching. People are kind of teaching all over the place. And it just doesn't really get off the ground.

[ 30 : 50 ] And so I don't think that's wise to take that approach. There needs to be order in the local churches. So the first thing in order to establish order is he says, listen, you have to appoint elders.

There needs to be leadership in the church. People who are going to oversee and make sure that the things that ought to be happening, the responsibilities of the church, actually do happen.

This word elder is something that not every church uses. But it's just one of the words that the Bible uses for a leader in the church. The Greek word is presbyterios, something like that.

And what does that sound like? Anybody? Presbyterian, right? We've heard of the Presbyterian church. So that's where they get their name from this Greek word. And all it means, an elder is what?

It's just somebody who's older. That's it. That's all it means. It doesn't mean anything more than that. But it can mean more than that, depending on the context, just like with a lot of words.

[ 31 : 56 ] So you can talk to somebody who's an elder, like an elderly statesman or an elder. Sometimes we say senior citizen or things like that. Somebody who's older. But in the context of a group or an organization, an elder is somebody who's kind of in charge, somebody who oversees.

This is a word that was used very commonly in the Old Testament with the Jews. And so you have the 12 tribes, and then they divide up into smaller, like family groups.

And then you would have elders. And sometimes all the elders of Israel would get together. And so these were people who were just leaders. And most of the time, they were older. Because that tends to be the people who are the leaders, the ones who have developed the wisdom and experience needed to lead.

Now, the Bible does not prescribe, as far as I can tell, a very regimented and detailed organizational specification for churches.

We'll read here kind of what the qualifications are for leaders, but there isn't a specification for all kinds of hierarchy and a lot of detail. And so I think because of that, we end up with a lot of different ways of organizing a church.

[ 33 : 11 ] And so I think there are three major ways that churches are organized, that I'm aware of anyway. People will refer to this as a church government.

And so one of the ones that's, I think, had the most history to it is what they call an Episcopal form of government. And that's where you have individuals who are kind of in a hierarchy.

And what are some examples anybody can think of of churches that operate that way? Catholic, I heard. Episcopalian, yeah.

Lutheran, okay. I think some Lutheran churches. I think some Methodist churches as well. I don't know if it's all of them. Anglican. And also Greek Orthodox. We're not as familiar with Greek Orthodox in this country.

But Greek Orthodox is quite common, especially out in the East, in Russia especially. And so quite big over there.

[ 34 : 10 ] But it's a hierarchy of individuals where there is authority from the top down. And so Catholic Church, I think, is what most people are familiar with. You have the Pope. And then maybe people can help me out. But is underneath that the Cardinals?

Is that underneath the Pope? And then you have Cardinals. And then is it Archbishops? And then Bishops? And then Priests? Did I get it right? I know that we have some Catholics or former Catholics here.

And so there's a hierarchy of how things are to be done. The next kind of form of church government is called Presbyterianism. And so what's the denomination that we know of that uses that form of government?

It's the Presbyterians. But a lot of Reformed churches also follow that matter, that model. And so Presbyterian form is, there isn't any one person who's leading, but there are basically groups.

So you still have a hierarchy, but there are groups of people. And so in a local church, you will have a group of people sometimes called a session, or sometimes it'll just be called a board of elders like we have here.

[ 35 : 16 ] And then you have kind of the next layer up, which is called actually a presbytery. And so you have representatives from a bunch of churches, and they'll form a presbytery. And they'll rule on certain things.

And then up higher, you have a synod, which is an even larger group that oversees, I don't know, a district or something, a region or something like that. So I think I'm getting all this right.

And then the third kind of model is a congregational model, and it's more of an independent type church like we are, in which it operates independently.

At Grace Bible Church, we do not have any kind of a synod or a group or a hierarchy that we answer to or need to be accountable to or anything like that.

And so independent churches, I think, are probably, I would say, the most common today, especially in this country. A Baptist would be congregational, Pentecostals, Church of Christ, Brethren churches, and then, of course, the non-denominational churches.

[ 36 : 17 ] And sometimes congregational churches will affiliate with certain groups. The Southern Baptists are one example because they're the biggest, but the Southern Baptists has actually, as a group, does not have very much control over the churches that are under them.

It's more of an umbrella group that provides resources and things like that. And they do require that you commit to a certain statement of faith. But other than that, they don't decide, for example, in the Catholic Church or in Presbyterianism, like who the pastor is is not decided by the congregation.

It's decided by the higher-ups. Sometimes they'll bring somebody in to be the new pastor or change things around or things like that. So I just thought I'd provide a little bit of context in kind of how things roll out in our day.

But there isn't a lot of detail. But I do think that the way we kind of approach things here in the congregational model, where churches are autonomous, to me seems to be the wisest model and approach.

Here we're independent, we're self-governing, and so we would be considered congregational. But this term elder that is being used here is just to reference a name for any leader in the church.

[ 37 : 32 ] So we here have a board of elders. There are six. There are supposed to be six. And then the pastor. And the pastor would also be considered an elder, especially in this context. But we'll use different names.

And we'll see in a second another name that might be used. The other thing I want to point out here is that as Paul is asking Titus to establish elders, it seems to me that he's asking Titus to establish elders from within these cities in Crete.

That he's not saying, well, we need to go find somebody over in Ephesus to go pastor the churches in Crete. And that's what we see everywhere, because there's a few other times, both with Timothy, and we see in the book of Acts, where Paul is instructing for elders to be established.

And I think that's a wise model. It's very common today for churches to, when they need a pastor, to bring somebody in from the outside. And I don't think there's anything wrong with that necessarily.

But I think there is some wisdom in raising up leadership from within a church. And so, you know, when you have somebody, I think one of the benefits, if you can call it a benefit, of bringing in somebody from the outside, and you see this all the time in the military, is there is less familiarity with the new general.

[ 39 : 00 ] And so with familiarity sometimes comes a lack of respect. And so when it's a new person, and you don't know all the mistakes they've made, right? You don't know all the screw-ups they've had.

And so, you know, all you see is this new guy, and he's got all these, you know, things across his chest. And, you know, that commands a lot of respect. But if you've had somebody who started out as a private, you know, and has come up through the ranks, he's like, oh, that old Joe, you know, I remember when, you know, we did this, and he made this mistake or did this, or he made this foolish decision or whatever.

And it kind of tends towards that familiarity leads to a lack of respect. And it shouldn't be the case, but that's, I think, why these things are handled that way in the military and maybe with the CEOs of companies, things like that.

But then what do you lose? Familiarity isn't bad in and of itself, is it? The church is what? The church is a family, isn't it?

Where we know each other, where we're involved in each other's lives. It's an incredible place for us to grow and to get to know each other. And so I don't think it's bad at all.

[ 40 : 14 ] I think that raising up people from within a church to take over leadership in some points, and we do that with our elder board, our elder boards. But a lot of times with the pastor, you know, that kind of head role, people are brought in from outside.

And again, like I said, it's not always, it's not like it's morally wrong or always wrong to do that, but I think we should always consider raising those up from within a congregation or from the local community.

All right, so then we're going to get into appointing elders. Now, in this case, who is doing the appointing of the elders?

Well, it's the elders. It's Paul giving instructions to Titus to appoint good elders. And he's about to give some instructions. How do you pick a good elder? Now, in churches like the Catholic Church, the local congregation or the local leaders don't pick who the new priest is going to be.

That comes from higher up. But in our case, in a local church like this, a congregational type church, the church is involved in choosing who that is, in making that appointment.

[ 41 : 29 ] And by the way, that word appointment, what's another word for appoint? Does anybody know? Ordain. Very good. It's ordain. And so just a few weeks ago, we had what we called an ordination service where I was ordained here.

And all that means is sometimes we think things are like mystical or magical or whatever. And so one of the things I appreciated when we had the laying on of hands up here, it was such a neat and wonderful thing.

But it's not a mystical thing. There's nothing being transferred through the Spirit or anything like that. But it's just a way to appoint somebody and for people to recognize that.

And that's all that is. But it's an important thing to do for someone to be appointed. But we are going to appoint people, and we ought to appoint people not based on, well, who we like, but based on the qualifications here that Paul is about to provide.

So let's get into it. Let me just read through the whole thing. If a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of dissipation or insubordination.

[ 42 : 34 ] By the way, I'm reading from the New King James, if it's a little different than yours. For a bishop must be blameless as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, holding fast to the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.

And so we're going to go through these, and I don't actually think we're going to get done here because of time, so we'll probably take a couple of weeks on all these things.

But the first thing he says, if a man is blameless. Now, holy cow, is that blameless? That seems to be a very high standard.

Without blame? Is there anybody here who can say, I'm without blame? None of us can say that. And so some people might read this to be, well, you have to live a morally perfect life.

And I don't think that's what he is saying at all. Now, there are some people who teach that moral perfection is something that everybody should strive to attain, and that you actually cannot be saved until you're morally perfect.

[ 43 : 54 ] Some people teach that. But that is certainly not the case. But, so it's not moral perfection. So what does he mean? I think what he means is, is that as he goes through all these qualifications, that there are none that you would be blameworthy of.

That this is a comprehensive list. I don't think it's a completely comprehensive list. In fact, as we read through all those things, I can think of some things that are maybe omitted.

And so if we were to be a little bit too wooden with this, one of the things I thought of is, is there anything in this list where he says that an elder has to be honest?

I mean, you could kind of, when he says holy or just, you know, that kind of somewhat relates. But it doesn't specifically mention honesty.

So should you appoint somebody as an elder who's a dishonest person? No, obviously not. So, but, you know, in our day, we tend to love to create more and more rules, especially our government.

[ 45 : 04 ] Did you notice that? How many laws are on the books? The kids have a funny book about weird laws. And there's a law, what is it? That you're not allowed to sleep on top of a refrigerator outside.

Is that a, that was a real law, isn't it? Something on, on the book somewhere. I can't remember. It's one, one of the states. That's bizarre. Why would somebody do that? Well, I can guess why.

You know, Billy got drunk one night and slept on, on top of his refrigerator outside. And so do we have to create a law for that? Of course not. That's absurd.

But we tend to, when, when people don't know right from wrong and don't have wisdom, we just create all these laws and all these rules. So as we read through these things that Paul is explaining, the kind of qualifications, we need to be able to expand and understand.

He's, he's getting at a point here. What is the type of life that someone have, that someone should have who is, is an elder? Kind of taking a little step back. It is important.

[ 46 : 07 ] We are listing qualifications here. So there are qualifications to be an elder. And if you read through the list, just kind of big picture, what are these qualifications relate to?

Does it relate to how much money you have? No. Does it relate to how good you are at speaking? No. No. There are, there are places where it says able to teach or apt to teach.

So that kind of relates. What about really well networked? Is that in there? What about you have a degree from a prestigious seminary?

Is that in the list? It's not. The things in this list have to do almost exclusively with what? Your character. The kind of person you are.

Are you a good person? Are you living a good Christian life? The other thing I'd like to point out here is that, is this a list of things that only apply to the leaders of a church?

[ 47 : 12 ] Is there a standard where you have a standard for elders or bishops or pastors or whatever, and then there's a standard for everybody else? Some people, I think, get that idea.

Well, you know, I don't, I get drunk on the weekends, but I'm not a pastor. Is that an appropriate way for Christians to think? Not at all.

So when we read these things in here about the qualifications for an elder, these are things that all of us as Christians should apply to ourselves, each and every one of us.

And so an elder is just someone who is successfully living the Christian life. All of these things are just describing the normal Christian life, the way a Christian ought to live, the way all of us should live.

But we need to make sure that we only put people in leadership who are successfully living that life. And some people, whether they're new in the faith or struggling at a certain period or whatever, don't successfully live up to these standards.

[ 48 : 15 ] And we can have mercy and grace and walk them along the path, but those people are not ready to be elders or leaders of a church. So blameless.

Now, the next thing I want to look at, and maybe we'll finish up with this one, since we're almost running out of time. But he says this, you need to be the husband of one wife.

The husband of one wife. Now, before I even get into this, well, what does that mean, the husband of one wife? Well, it seems kind of obvious. But one of the things I want to point out here, in the original language, the language used is a one-woman man.

That's the kind of man that you ought to be, a one-woman type of man. But before we get into that, I want to point out something that Paul just kind of glosses over, in that he's talking about a husband.

Does he say, you have to be the spouse of another spouse? Is that what he says? No, he says you have to be the husband of one wife.

[ 49 : 27 ] What does that infer? A man, right? And why would Paul not mention that explicitly? I think he wouldn't explicitly say that because it should be totally obvious.

Now, we live in a culture today where there is a lot of confusion about the differences between men and women. Has anybody noticed that men and women are a little different from each other?

Yeah, a lot different. But there's a lot of confusion today about that. But I think Paul doesn't mention it because it's just assumed. And so, there are a lot of churches today.

We'll drive by and you'll see, you know, Reverend so-and-so. And a lot of times it will be a woman. And that is completely and totally out of order. However, God intended for the church to be a place where people would be shepherded and guarded from immorality, from false teaching, from things like that.

And God's design, and we see this in the family, is that who would be the guard and shepherd over a family? The husband. The man.

[ 50 : 49 ] Right, has anybody ever seen, what's that TV show? Little House on the Prairie. Have you ever seen that? I love Little House on the Prairie. But can you imagine an episode where Ma and Pa and the kids are outside and up comes this kind of menacing-looking party of people on their horses?

And Ma, she turns to Pa and says, Pa, take the kids in the house. What in the world is going on?

That's bizarre. Of course that doesn't happen. Because God did not design women to be shepherds and guards over families.

He designed men to do that. So as men, we need to take that responsibility. And that is our responsibility, not just for our families, but also for the church of God.

And so it's utterly ludicrous. It is insanity for us to, another thing that we do, when it comes to guards and shepherds, the military.

[ 51 : 53 ] Right? Is it women that we need to be putting machine guns into their hands to guard the freedoms of this nation? Absolutely not.

In fact, years ago, probably before my time, if you were a kid and you really wanted to insult somebody, you know, you're really mad at your friend.

You wanted to insult him? You would say, oh yeah? Your mama wears combat boots. Have you ever heard that? I think I've seen it on old shows.

You're a sissy. Yeah, I call you a sissy. And so, you know, back years ago, we understood how things worked. Women are weaker than men.

They're more vulnerable. And men ought to take the lead and be the protectors, the guards, and the shepherds over women and for others who are weak. And so, that is something that Paul just assumes.

[ 52 : 54 ] And I don't think it's just confusion in our culture that this is just confusion. I think it's just open rebellion against God's design. And, you know, it's not like there isn't confusion, but there is just so much open rebellion towards the way that God designed things.

So, a one-woman man is the Greek. So, what does that mean? Well, you could say, well, he's saying, well, you can't have two wives, right?

And that's true. Did God design men and women to where one man would marry multiple wives? Yes. No, that was not part of God's design in the very beginning. Now, it can be confusing because we actually see polygamy in the Old Testament.

And God seems to overlook it quite a bit. So, that can cause some confusion. But I think it's very clear in one Genesis the way that God, did God bring three women to Adam?

No. He made one and he brought one woman to Adam. And that's the way things are supposed to work. But I don't even think Paul is here necessarily talking about polygamy, though that's probably included.

[ 54 : 00 ] Because, really, polygamy wasn't even a common thing. It was actually against the law in Rome. You weren't allowed to be married to multiple women. Now, unless you had certain privileges, like if you were one of the rulers, then you could do that.

But if you were just a regular Joe, you know, that was against the law. So, what does it mean, a one woman man? Well, it's talking about marital fidelity. That in your life as a man, as a husband, you're faithful to your wife.

And so, it encompasses all the kinds of sexual morality that might come into play when it comes to marriage and the relationship between a man and a woman. You're faithful to your wife.

It's one man and one woman and you're faithful to your wife. I also don't think that he's forbidding people who, like, have been remarried, for example, from being elders.

Because you could put it that way, right? Only married to one wife. Well, if I got divorced and then remarried. Now, sometimes divorces do indicate a flaw in somebody's character where they don't understand that that marriage was for life.

[ 55 : 07 ] But there are also times where, you know, divorce has happened and it's, you know, it's not anyone, it's not, I don't want to say any one person's fault. It's always at least one person's fault, isn't it?

Always. But the Bible does allow for remarriage and that's a whole other topic. But I don't think he's saying that. If you've been divorced, you can't be remarried.

And also, don't think that he's saying, well, if you're not married at all, because Paul wasn't married. It doesn't seem that Titus would be married. Maybe he was. Timothy, I don't think, was married.

Jesus wasn't married. There's plenty of people in the Bible who are not married who were given positions of authority in the church. Well, because of time's sake, well, I'm going to end there.

But, as I promised last week, and I should have said something, I would like to take an opportunity. We've got five minutes. Maybe we can go over some more.

[ 56 : 04 ] But if there's any comments or thoughts or questions that have come up, I'd love to get a mic roaming around. So the first one we've got up here is Ron.

So we're working on a microphone. Sorry, I should have given you some heads up there, Keith. Oh, we don't have a mic?

Okay. So go ahead and ask, and I'll repeat the question. Or comment. I just couldn't pick these elders overnight. If you're going to have something on character of somebody, you have to get to know them.

Yeah. So the comment made is this isn't something that you can just get to know somebody overnight. You just met them. You know, you had dinner with them, and you're like, okay. They're good. Right?

You have to get to know somebody over time, which is also another, I think, good reason why raising somebody up from within the local community is wise, because it's really hard to get to know somebody's character in just a few interviews.

[ 57 : 07 ] So thanks for that comment, Ron. Anybody else? Anybody else? Anybody else? Anybody else? Anybody else? Anybody else? Anybody else? Anybody else?

Anybody else? Anybody else? Anybody else? Anybody else? Anybody else? All right. And as always, if you have a question but don't want to ask in public or whatever, there are offering, what do you call that thing, offering box out in the back.

You can slip in a question, a note, and we can maybe bring it up. I appreciate that Joe brought up something last week, and I got to mention that this morning about hope.

Joe had brought that up. And so any comment or question you have, feel free to bring it up. Well, if there's nothing else, let's close in prayer.

Father, thank you so much for your word and the truths that are in here. Sometimes our culture brings so much confusion to how things ought to be, and we are so grateful that we get to open up scriptures that you gave us 2,000 years ago and see clarity in what you would have from us.

[ 58 : 16 ] And we ask that you would, each and every day, not just this morning, but each and every day, as we open up the Bible, that you would open up our understanding to know what you would want us to know, to understand your word as you have written it.

In Jesus' name, amen.