

1 TIMOTHY 3:1

In the local church in Ephesus there was the problem of false teaching that was distracting the church from its mission of preaching the gospel and making disciples.

Paul writes to Timothy and the big message is... "Sort out the church for the sake of the gospel!"

In the first two chapters, Timothy is to do this by fighting for the gospel.

He does this by silencing the false teachers, by leading the church in praying for all people, and by teaching the church how to display the gospel.

Three ways in which the church will display the gospel: through praying men dependent upon God, through godly women dressed modestly, and through male leadership in the church.

A. Introduction

1. Many problems in the local church are caused by problems with the leadership.

An absence of leaders.

The wrong kind of leaders.

2. Paul tells Timothy to "Sort of the church for the sake of the gospel!" in these next chapters by appointing appropriate leaders.

Good leadership is vital if the church is going to be focussed on its mission of preaching the gospel and making disciples.

B. Being an elder is a beautiful task

"The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task."

1. To be an elder is to be an overseer.

Has the image of leading a local congregation – overseeing the affairs of the local church.

It will involve teaching, giving direction, resolving conflict, applying wisdom to situations that arise, making decisions, and being an example.

2. To be an elder is to do a noble task.

It is a good thing to do.

It may at times be a burden or a headache – but ultimately it is a beautiful task.

Why?

Because you are modelling Christ to people.

Because you are encouraging people to follow Christ.

Because you are seeking to help the church focus on its mission of preaching the gospel and making disciples.

Because Jesus has designed the church to have leaders.

C. Being an elder is something that all men should want to do

"The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task."

1. Being an elder is something an elder should want to do.

An internal desire or longing that God has given them that leads to them asking the elders to be considered for nomination to be an elder.

An internal desire or longing that comes when an elder asks them whether they would like to be considered for nomination to be an elder.

It is not wrong to want to be an elder because you desire to serve God and His people.

It is wrong to want to be an elder because you desire to be recognised.

Spurgeon spoke of "an intense, all-absorbing desire for the work."

2. Being an elder is something all men should want to do.

Apart from the qualification of being able to teach, the character of an elder should mark every Christian man.

D. Application

1. We need to speak positively about being an elder.

We need to encourage Christian men to see being an elder as something great to do.

2. We need to spot qualified men who might aspire to be elders.

Who to look out for?

Committed men – in serving, in attending.

Qualified men – who have the qualifications outlined in the pastoral epistles.

Respectful men – who respect and trust the existing leadership.

Humble men – whose desire is to serve not to be recognised.

Patient men – who have this desire over a period of time.

3. When we no longer have this desire to be an elder we need to consider whether it is time to step down.