

TITUS 1:5-9

A. Introduction

1. Titus is one of three letters that the apostle Paul wrote, which are known as the Pastoral Epistles.

These are letters addressed to individuals who were church leaders, one of whom was Titus.

2. Why Titus?

Titus is a great book for us to study together because it gives us a model for how to lead a local church that is healthy in terms of what it believes and how it behaves.

In the opening greeting to Titus, Paul reminds us that:

The goal of a church that is healthy is to see people become Christians, remain as Christians and grow as Christians.

The method a church that is healthy will use to achieve this is to preach the gospel.

The motivation of a church that is healthy to do this is in response to God's grace and peace.

3. But a church will not be healthy in these areas if it does not have qualified leaders, which is Paul's focus in Titus 1:5-9.

"The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you." (Titus 1:5)

Paul had preached the gospel, founded the church, and begun to disciple the believers in the church in Crete, but had left before elders were appointed.

It could be that elders had not been appointed because in 1 Timothy he gives a warning about the danger of putting people in positions of leadership too soon (1 Timothy 3:6; 5:22).

But enough time has now passed and this unfinished work needed to be finished, and so he instructs Titus to appoint elders – to ensure that every local church in every town had a group of men to lead them.

4. Who should he appoint as elders of these churches?

Paul gives three essential qualifications for elders.

B. They are godly in their conduct

1. It is vital that those appointed to be elders are godly in their conduct.

They are men who live lives worth copying – who set an example worth following.

Two particular characteristics mark their conduct – they are faithful and they are effective.

2. How do we know if someone is godly in their conduct in this way?

Paul says, "Look at their homes!"

"An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient." (Titus 1:6)

Are they faithful to their wife?

Are they effective at nurturing their children? Do they get the balance of kindness and firmness right because this will show itself in how they nurture the church?

C. They are godly in their character

1. It is vital that those appointed to be elders are godly in their character.

In verses 7 and 8 we are given a picture of the kind of men the church needs to be its leaders.

They are to be blameless. What does this mean practically?

Negatively, these five qualities.

“Since an overseer is entrusted with God’s work, he must be blameless - not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain.” (Titus 1:7)

Positively, these six qualities.

“Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined.” (Titus 1:8)

2. All these character traits will be seen in how they relate to others and live before others, both inside and outside of the church.

They need to have a good reputation in the church – otherwise the rest of the church will not follow their example or lead.

They need to have a good reputation in the community – otherwise unbelievers will not take seriously what they believe and teach.

D. They are godly in their convictions

1. It is vital that those appointed to be elders are godly in their convictions.

“He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.” (Titus 1:9)

They must hold firmly to the Bible’s priority, authority, and sufficiency for what to believe and how to live.

How will this be seen?

2. It will be seen in what they say to others.

They are to teach the truth.

They are to defend the truth.

E. Application

1. What this local church needs the most are elders who are godly in their conduct, character and convictions.

2. Assessing whether someone is qualified in these areas will take time and require asking questions such as:

Is there anything about their home life that is a cause for concern?

Is there anything about their church and community life that is a cause for concern?

Is there anything about what they believe that is a cause for concern?