

8/2/20 - Titus 1:5-9 - "Fishing For Certain Men"

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[0 : 0 0] It's known to be true that if you gathered probably, we'll just say, 10 leaders of an organization in one single room, and you asked them what the top three traits would be of a good leader in their opinion, you would probably get a plethora of different responses. Probably staggering responses, sometimes inconsistent responses, and sometimes polar opposite responses of what a good leader actually entails and what it looks like. Using a simple illustration, we could probably expect that maybe many leaders that are gathered in that room may refer to the boat, and a simple illustration to the boat. And some may refer to a good leader is the oar of that boat, because it's driving that boat forward. Some may say that a good leader is actually the boat, because it's supporting everyone within that boat. Or you might say that a good leader is the rudder which steers that boat in different directions, or possibly that guy that sits in the back of the boat, that looks for danger ahead, that looks for possibly shallow areas, that looks for the direction that they're heading and coordinates. Honestly, all of those responses would define, essentially, a good leader in various different times in the life of an organization. Sometimes you have to be an oar, sometimes you have to be the boat. So not any of those would necessarily be wrong, but what a plethora of responses it would actually be. But often with church leadership, you might actually think that some organizations would say that regarding, like, pastoral leadership, it's not the boat. It has nothing to do with the boat that represents a pastor. It's the guy that the whole crew threw off, and he's drowning off, swimming to shore for his dear life, because the church has thrown him off. Unfortunately, that is sometimes true. Thanks the Lord, it's not true in this church. But much of an organization, much of the life of the organization rises and falls upon leadership, upon its leadership.

God believes leadership in the local church is vital. In fact, he addresses this element in detail four times in the New Testament. And within each of these four times within the New Testament regarding elders, there's always an emphasis on personal character and also theological competencies, what you know and who you are. And this remains true for all believers. God is most interested, honestly, in who we are, not necessarily what we do. Similar to last week, we will again see the contingent relationship of our doctrine being linked with our devotion as the subtitle of this series.

So turn with me to Titus 1. Stay there. If you're new here, just keep your Bible open to that section of passage. We are going to be discussing that. Look with me at verse 1, or verse 5, rather. And I'm going to split this up into various sections. This section is going to actually be titled, Introducing the Office of Elder. How do elders relate to deacons? How do deacons relate to the congregation? What is all of this? Is this something that we got from the Barnes and Noble shelf, that how to organize your church and be successful? We will see that this is an inspired organization within the local church. And for anybody joining the, attending the new members class later, this is actually going to be a cheat because this is actually something we cover in that class. So we might actually finish a little early. Pretty good, right? So look at me with section 1. Paul says to Titus, this man who's on a mission in Crete, 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. As Paul continues his letter to Titus, he is providing marching orders that the Lord desires for him to fulfill and to organize within the churches in Crete.

So we don't know a lot about these specific believers. We don't know who evangelized them. We don't know how they came about. All we know is that in Acts 2, we did have Cretans attending that Pentecost, Peter's first sermon at Pentecost. There were Cretans. Maybe somebody went back and evangelized that island. All we know is that it was an island full of believers in the eastern Mediterranean.

That's all we know. And then we can gather from the detail in this text that there were groups of believers assembled, actually assembled, physically assembled in Crete. However, there was no spiritual oversight.

[5 : 22] There was no direction. There was no authority. It was literally probably like their own chas, only on the good side of, you know, being on God's side, not the world's side. You know, anything goes according to what we desire. Could you imagine a church in Corinth without a Paul writing a letter to them?

It was probably pretty chaotic, if you could imagine. I like to think of the task set before Titus being that of a puzzle that lays upon a table that we often look at.

A thousand-piece puzzle that you just lay all the pieces out on the table, and God shaping each one of these believers and bringing them into new life. Titus is commissioned to tend to that table, to assemble this church, to direct their affairs, to help put that puzzle together. Lest we say, well, God's sovereign, and he's gonna, you know, everybody's a believer, so just let them do what they want, right? That's not so much for the church. The Lord does desire there to be structure, which brings me to the main point of what I'm going to be trying to persuade us today, based on Paul's writing to Titus, that the sustenance of the church is provided through the work of church elders. The sustenance of the church is provided through the work of its elders.

And we see in this passage some interesting things in verse 5. Look, look down with me. We see the word elders appear out of nowhere. Appoint elders.

So we know about this specific office that Titus is supposed to direct in these towns and to appoint leaders. We see that there is a plurality, number one. To appoint elders, multiple people within in every town. It's not providing one guy, the one go-to guy to direct all the affairs. No.

[7 : 32] Multiple men. Now, there's a little bit of leniency. We see a little bit of a degree of flexibility in this passage because Paul gives Titus this task, but he doesn't necessarily state. There's a ratio that I read in this book from, we'll just pick on Barnes and Nobles again, from Barnes and Nobles that says to have a successful church, you need one elder per 50 people. There's the ratio. Titus, he doesn't say that. So we can understand that there is a sense of Christian liberty to look at our situation, specific needs and situations to say, yeah, maybe if we're a church of 50 people, we shouldn't have 50 elders. What are we doing? So there's a degree of flexibility. And looking upon the context in verse six through nine of this passage, kind of looking forward a little bit, a little bit further down, we can see that the Lord is much more concerned, not of the quantity of elders, because he doesn't state it, but man, he goes in depth about the quality of leaders to fill this role. He is not, he is not concerned nearly as much about the quantity, but the quality.

And so I just want to kind of jump, jump off this, off the elders for just a minute to broadly stroke a couple, a couple, couple references from other scripture in, in Timothy, just real quick. But we have quite a bit of, of text to go through today in full, but there's two offices in the local church.

That's the offices of elders and deacons. Those are the two offices. And these offices are distinct from one another. They are distinct from one another in function, but very, very unique in character, very unique and very similar in character. And we understand through, through scripture, I actually cut this out of the sermon today for the sake of time. But if you desire to talk about it, we here at Youngstown Metro believe that an elder is a pastor and a pastor is an overseer. Those words are all used in scripture in the New Testament interchangeably. So when you refer to an elder, you refer to a pastor. If you refer to an overseer, you refer to the, the elder, or, or if you want to go into the actual meaning of overseer, bishop. But we don't use bishop here too much. Rick, I mean, we can, yeah, you want to be bishop. Okay. Rick's going to be bishop here on out. You heard it. I'm just kidding. He'll probably reprimand you if you start calling him that. So elder, pastor, overseer throughout scripture is used interchangeably. Now I could give you an exhaustive list of systematic theology to arrive you there, but I can, if you're interested in learning more about that, just shoot me a text message and I'll, I'll give you the scriptures that will help highlight that.

So within our church, we observed that the importance of the two offices of elder, pastor, overseer, elders, and deacons are, are all, are very important, but also the congregation is very important as well in the life of the church. So the elders are responsible for the oversight.

As we see in this passage, they're in charge of the teaching, the defending of doctrine and caring well for the church. The deacons are responsible for supporting the elders in their oversight, in their teaching, in defending doctrine and caring well for the church to support them, and especially aiding in the practical means of service within the church. That does not take them away from the ministry

of prayer and the ministry of preaching the word. And so this doesn't mean, this is sometimes contingent because we have a lot of hardworking individuals that say, oh, you're a pastor. Well, you know, you'd barely do any work throughout the week. You just sit around, read, and think, and pray, right? That's all a pastor does. You know, it's so, it's so looked down upon of that they really don't do anything. What do pastors do? They have meetings, they have coffee, they drink coffee, and they read. That's such a low view of the pastorate, such a low view of the pastorate. In fact, God has called people to come and help the work of the pastor and the elder, and they call the deacons to help. Not to say that the Bible holds a low view of people's personal needs in life. So if somebody needs help moving, obviously contact a pastor. Feel free to contact me for anything, but I'm going to probably give it to the deacons to help facilitate that. And that's not saying that I have a low view of your need. That's saying that God puts a high view of prayer, of the ministry of the word, that I need to be tending to that. I ought to be praying for that move for you, rather than actually helping in the hands and feet. So we see that according to scripture, the deacons support the elders in the affairs of the church. And then also the congregation is the place where all matters of the life of the church rest. Think about what's going on in

[12:47] Crete at this time, when Titus is going to Crete. Think about this. So there's obviously something happening in Crete, and that happening is based upon the assembly of believers.

So we can assume that these members were probably saying, we got to do this. We got to evangelize this place. We should do this. Can we build a nice welcome area? Can we do this and do that, do this and do that? So we can assume that that stuff is going on in Crete. But what Crete was missing was they didn't have somebody overseeing that. They didn't have somebody that was able to look upon the affairs and say, actually, we're missing the gospel here, guys. It's a great idea, but how about we try to maybe go back to scripture and see what scripture says about these ideas and things like that. The life of the church rests upon the congregation. You can look at me and Rick all you want to start all these great outreach projects and everything like that. And that has been pretty much the case in the past. But man, when we start to realize that each and every person, a member of this church owns that responsibility, that you're participating in that, man, that is when you see revival. That is when you see this church starting to cast this light upon the north side of Youngstown, when the church is looking out and the elders are there supporting in preaching, supporting in prayer.

This is church, guys. This is what you're a part of. How often we get this backwards and we look to the elders as kind of the party planners. It's not obedience to scripture. So when we begin to see Youngstown Metro is not something that we merely attend. You know, we come on Sundays and, you know, we come a little bit late as, you know, some do, you know, maybe straggle in. It's just a Sunday routine, right? But when you come and you participate, guess how you can participate in Sunday mornings? We pray every Sunday morning at 9.30. You ought to get involved if you're feeling called in that regard. 9.30. This building literally opens up at 8.30 in the morning and two hours before people start coming in. Come. Be a part of what God does. The working of the groundwork before the church service. We're going to realize that God intended great beauty for our gathering in this church. Members meetings should be something that you schedule around in this church. It should be something that once it hits your calendar, it's something that's non-negotiable.

Even if something like a friend that you haven't seen for a while, oh, but this friend is going to be coming into town. You can tell your friend, you know, either attend the members meeting with me or, you know, we can do something before or after that. It's something that you prioritize around. Remember that verse, that word, koinonia? Remember that when I gave you a little Greek lesson that one Sunday about participating in the Lord's Supper? That participation of every church member is that, is the same content of a married person. The same commitment level of being married is the same commitment level in participating in the Lord's Supper and with one another.

[16:01] So we go into section two today as we continue in this text, and we're going to be through verse six through eight. It says, And we see here that we see the continuity between terms between elder and overseer. He's referring to the same office within context, so we know that elder is overseer. It's the same person that he's charging. And there's other verses that call an overseer relating to that of shepherding, that of being a pastor. I'm going to have an ongoing illustration today as we go through the text.

And I'm going to, I felt like making a fishing illustration. It seemed to make sense in my mind. Hopefully it makes sense to you. And so as we go throughout the rest of the sermon, think of fishing.

Okay? Now it says, in this verse, If anyone is above reproach. This made me think of casting that giant net out into the sea.

And starting to reel in that net. If anyone is above reproach. So we have a generality at this point. So you pull in that net and you got, we're going to refer to elders as fish today.

Okay? Stinky, slimy fish. All right? Elders are fish. So you pull in all these fish. And some, within this net that you cast out, you find some fish.

[17 : 46] You find some, maybe you find a jellyfish. Maybe you find a boot. You find a plethora of things within this net. But at this point, he makes a broad statement.

If anyone is above reproach. Meaning that the office of elder is not just for anyone to passively fill. It is not identifying the best among you.

But rather, it is identifying certain people. You're looking for something in people. That they're above reproach. That is the biggest general term that you can use as a qualifier.

So as you reel in, you start visualizing. You slap that whole net of fish upon the dock. Or whatever, the boat, the deck of the boat.

I don't know fishing terms. You slap that net there. And you're looking at all this stuff. You see a boot in there. You see a hat. You see all this stuff that consists in this catch.

[18 : 46] Now it's time to sort through a little bit. But it's time to do a little bit. So above reproach is a key qualifier. And it's used twice in this section to provide emphasis that Paul is trying to communicate here.

This means that an elder is to be someone whose life is not subject to questioning of character or integrity. Because if that were to be so, it would be a distortion to the gospel and also the church that they are to shepherd.

So practically speaking, if anyone is above reproach. So if you're looking through these fish and you separate everyone. You get all those boots out of there. You don't need a boot. You're not eating a boot for dinner. You're eating fish.

You need fish. So you separate them, those who are above reproach. You need a fish. You need an elder. So if anybody is above reproach, it would be something clearly evident in their lives.

It is those who are imitative because of the way their lives proclaim the gospel as well. This shines a positive light on the church and the gospel. And so Paul zeroes in on the family and literally puts the family under a microscope.

[19 : 50] The next qualifier here, you know, we got the fish. All the boots are sorted out. He puts the microscope on the family because the family never lies.

The family is the proving ground of church leadership. And so we see in this passage a couple things. You need to be above reproach and faithful.

He must be faithful to his wife in this passage. Not only does this indicate that an elder is reserved for a man. Obviously, we're not talking about, you know, different genders of marriage and same-sex marriage.

This is obviously in its original context with a wife. So not only does it indicate that an elder is reserved for a man, but it also reveals the faithfulness of this man.

Bottom line is that this man will be devoted to only one woman. And that one woman being his wife at that very time, indicating his faithfulness. This passage is often translated to literally mean a one-woman man.

[20 : 58] One-woman man. And this emphasizes that the elder's sexual conduct must be exemplary in purity and commitment. That's what's at stake here.

Just as John MacArthur actually quotes, an elder must have an unsolid, lifelong reputation for devotion to his spouse and to sexual purity.

Now, there's a couple things that this verse is not saying as we look at faithful to a wife. This doesn't mean that a single man can't fulfill this office as elder because that would disqualify Paul.

That would disqualify Titus. That would disqualify Timothy. Jesus himself would be disqualified. The model elder. So there's a couple things that this isn't saying.

But it's regarding faithfulness. And oftentimes, there are certain situations where it might prove that a man is actually above reproach.

[22 : 00] He is faithful to maybe his wife in a remarriage because his previous wife had abandoned him. And there was literally nothing that he could do about the situation. It didn't reflect his faithfulness as a man, but it reflected rather somebody else's faithfulness.

So there's a couple situations that you can kind of look at situation to situation to qualify a married man or even remarried man to be faithful to his wife.

And then we see in this passage, it's up on the screen, faithful to his children. And this does not mean, our translation actually says believers. Children must be believers.

This isn't saying that your children, the only people that are qualified for elder is a man whose children are believers. They're regenerates.

Now, that would separate the men from the boys, wouldn't it? But it's actually not even saying that. Many other translations don't use believer. ESV, for some reason, uses believer. All the other translations that I referenced uses faithful.

[23 : 05] All children must be faithful. And actually, this word for faithful is the same word used down in verse 9, where it says, hold firm to the trustworthy word.

Trustworthy and believers are both the same word in sense. So we can understand what's being spoken in this verse. That these children are to be faithful based on a certain model of that faithfulness.

Instead, this verse speaks to children being free of recklessness, being free of rebelliousness. Because we know that recklessness and rebelliousness, church, is often a response of lack of care. Usually when more kids act out, it's because of us. Often. I know that hurts some of us to kind of wrap our heads around. But it's true.

It's true. A lot of our kids' faithfulness rests upon the parents. So rather than beating them into submission, this highlights the steadfastness of character that children can say, regardless of how they act out at times.

[24 : 14] Sometimes they do test the water in sinfulness. But how do we respond? Do they respond knowing that when we reprimand them, that they know that daddy loves them, no matter what?

A godly leader, a godly dad will do everything, whatever is necessary, church, in terms of time and attention to nurture his children in training and instruction of the Lord.

Just as Deuteronomy 6.4 says. Just as Ephesians 6.4 says. How dire this is needed in the church today, right? Men who are in a relationship for the long haul.

Not a relationship based on convenience. Not having a tax deduction at the end of the year. Not having that extra child care act deduction.

And this is the same for the church. This is a man that has a steadfastness. The same steadfastness to his children is also going to be expressed within the steadfastness in a church. Because you're shepherding sinful people.

[25 : 19] Imperfect people. People who aren't going to respond how you want them to respond often. As you're trying to lead them to respond. And sometimes church members can sometimes kick and scream at times.

But faithful is the elder who can bear with that church member. The sound mind. Thinking about the bigger picture that God loves this church member just as God loves his children.

So we have the fish. Going back to our fish. We have our fish sorted out. We have the guys that are right for the job.

We got the guys who are not ready yet. Then we got the boots that just, you know. They have different purposes of protecting feet. Not saying that they're pointless and to be cast to the side. To be burnt like a dead branch in the fire. Or, no, boots serve a purpose. Hats serve a purpose. I'm glad we found a hat and a boot. Maybe we'll use it another day. That also states usefulness. We're not saying that we're casting people and shunning people from the gathering.

[26 : 21] If you're not an elder or a good fish in our illustration. So identifying the bad fish. Now upon closer investigation. We got a plethora of fish.

We got our elders here in this catch. Now we have to really start digging in to see which one are the good fish. Which one are the bad fish. And so we see in this passage.

He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or a drunkard or a violent or greedy for gain. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain.

Now just looking at these words and a couple, a little bit of the description of each and all these words. Of the bad fish that just aren't ready yet. You know, it would be arrogant. Being stubborn. Being self-willed at times. Saying that no matter what that church member says, this is the plan. We're doing it. You can go find another church member.

[27 : 22] This is my plan. This is my ship. Either go with the direction we're headed or get off. Govern. Arrogance. Or being quick-tempered.

Quickly aroused to anger. Just like a father who's just kind of out of control with his children. I think even the most faithful elder can relate to some sort of temptation to anger at times.

Where we have to be like, Lord, help me die to my flesh right now. Because I just, I so just want to go for a walk and just leave the kids behind. To be completely honest. They're testing me right now. I need a break, Lord. We all can kind of feel that temptation and fathering and parenting and mothering at times. But faithful is the elder who is not quick-tempered.

Who can bear with the situations that the Lord has called within that church. Obviously, not being a drunkard or addicted to wine or a heavy drinker. Obviously, if you see my vehicle at the local bar every time you pass by, you know we have a problem.

[28 : 22] And yeah, the elder might be saying, oh, I'm evangelizing. Yeah. Sounds like a good ministry there. Do you remember their names when you evangelize?

And we also see violence. Being a bully. Being brutal. Picking on people's weaknesses. Mocking them. Being violent.

Being violent. Being greedy. Being in it for, you know, show me the money sort of leadership. You know, get more people in here. You know, more people equals more money.

So let's structure everything in the church to reflect lots of money. No, that's not here. And that's actually not according to Scripture as well. Not greedy.

Desires of acquiring wealth. So we see in this passage, as elders, pastors, and overseers, they act as God's managers in the local church.

[29 : 19] It is important that this man realize a picture-perfect home may appear to qualify.

Because, actually, your kids respond like they have halos over their heads because you beat them into submission.

And they don't even want to speak against your character because they know that they are fearful of the result that might happen. This isn't just the facade of having a picture-perfect home. Having your Instagram feed full of happiness and all this joy. But once behind the walls, behind the door, at the end of the day, is just violence.

Yelling and anger. A totally different person. The place of elder is not to live a double life. This would disqualify him. This is instead someone who knows his identity is consumed in God's calling to his life.

There is nothing else in life that would fulfill him better than the calling of an elder. And this drives his function. The function of his identity. This kind of results back to last week's message of that our doctrine drives our devotion.

[30 : 26] What an elder knows about himself is going to drive how he expresses what he knows. His devotion is not doing life for approval or applause, but devotion to the Lord.

And then we see in this passage, we see the right fish. So we got the wrong fish out of the spectrum. We got these bulky, we got these meaty fish all in a collection.

Man, these are going to be great fish to bring to our dinner. And so we see those fish laid out in verse 8. In Paul continuing, not like that, but hospitable.

A lover of good. Self-controlled. Upright. Holy. And disciplined. I think it should be up on the screen. I think it's up on the screen.

So we have a couple words here, and they're also descriptors of those words. So hospitable.

Obviously, this is disposed to treat guests and strangers like they're on the inside.

[31 : 30] That they're always welcome to come in. This was in the first century. Hospitality was the biggest and most effective way you could express your love and care for one another. It wasn't merely so that you would continue to attend church, or be a happy church member, or be entertained.

Oh, I got to do something to entertain these people. It didn't have anything to do with entertainment. It had all to do with love that I care about this person. Regardless of how long they've been at the church, no matter how much money they give to the church, no matter how newer they are to the

church.

We can also see in this passage that they are a lover of good. Characterized by a love for all good things. So you can obviously get to know these people that you know what they like.

This guy likes golf. He's not just a Debbie Downer. Oh, I would golf, but I just can't. I can't hit the ball worth a lick. You know, or talking to those guys who just always take that conversation to this negative point.

That like an Eeyore walking around. Everything good in life is somehow bad. And do you understand what I'm trying to say? Those people that just cast this shadow on just everything.

[32 : 43] Lover of good. You can tell that this man loves his wife. That he loves his job and everything like that. And also being self-controlled. Being prudent.

Also, that means prudent. Keeping restraint over one's passions and desires. And being upright. Being just. Accepting a right and wrong.

Knowing what is right. Knowing what is wrong. And living in light of that standard. And being also holy, this passage says. Moral and ritual purity.

It literally contexts. Within the context of this passage. It's saying that you know how to distinguish living for this or living for this. And you actually act upon it. You are living in a holy manner.

And also disciplined. Kind of relating to self-controlled. As the passage already stated. Of having your desires being controlled. Especially sensual desires.

[33 : 39] Remember that verse in James 1.24. Where it talks about the man who looks intently into the mirror. And then upon leaving that mirror. Forgets what he's like. An elder instead is a man who looks intently in that mirror.

And knows every characteristic of who he is. Leaves that mirror. And he remembers what he is like. An elder is not like the man listed in James 1.24. Fortunately, by grace alone.

So, elders are able to fulfill their call. By grace alone. And by grace, you, church members, are able to strive towards the same mark of an elder as well.

Okay? Far from legalism, the life of an elder or a Christian are marked in humility and repentance. All of this.

All of these qualifications. The good fish, the bad fish. Thank God we're fish, right? Should be the quote of the day. This is not just for a checklist for just elders.

[34 : 51] This is to be strivings of purity within the church. Especially when we miss the mark. Constantly. By grace, we are equipped in this life and is not anything of ourselves.

At the least bit. And this is sort of where the gospel comes into view. Being God's steward means that we have received something.

That God has given us something. As this passage says. As overseers. For an overseer, as God's steward, must be. X, Y, Z.

So an overseer understands that everything that he is. Everything that makes up who he is and his identity as an elder. Has been literally given to him by the grace of God.

And so in so doing. There's no reason for any elder to puff his chest out. Saying, I'm the chosen one. Actually, you're called to think of yourself as the least of those.

[35 : 52] To get down on your knees and wash the church members' feet, essentially. That is the quality of an elder. Now, a man suitable for this role is not to be a superhuman.

Perfect. Because we know that only Jesus Christ was the perfect elder. Only Jesus Christ could check every one of these marks off the list.

He was perfect in his humanity on this earth. But how are you doing as a Christian according to this list? There's a reason why I put those on the screen. Because I want us to kind of think about these within our own lives.

Whether you're called to an elder. Whether you are a faithful church member. How are you doing? And you're striving. It's true, none of us will officially arrive, in a sense, on this earth.

But it is also a reality that God will bring men equipped to a certain task. To some degree. According to his requirements in this passage. The Lord God is giving standards that are achievable.

[37 : 01] And that are to be strivings. Even when we fail, it just proves that we're human. And then we repent in humility. And then go back for the mark. Now this is not saying that elders have arrived at any sense.

But we have a good mindset of knowing that all that we are is because of Jesus Christ and his grace. To summarize the calling of this office.

It is for those who are willing to put their entire lives open to evaluation. Including their character. As you can see, it's something not simply for anyone.

But God equips churches to have the right people to fulfill this office. He will. Obviously, we have quite a catch of good fish.

But man, could you imagine being so nitpicky over your catch? Boy. Are you sure we're supposed to do this? Maybe we can like...

[38 : 01] Maybe... That fish isn't that small. Don't throw it back. You know, we can maybe use that for an appetizer. Maybe non... You know, just to... You know, we can use it for this office. Maybe bring a little bit of compromise to these standards.

Well, he's a little... You know, he's angry maybe six out of the seven days of the week. You know, let's have some grace and just, you know, bring him in. And all of a sudden, you know, ten months down the line or a year down the line, he's starting to rip the heads of church members off because he's quick to anger.

It brings a limited men, but it brings the quality of men that are suitable for this office. There's nothing that we compromise on. Doing so would be a disobedience to Scripture. But you have separated the catch and also brought them under close investigation into what is inside.

Are they packed full of meat? Are they healthy? How is their lives looking? Now, it's time to fulfill their role. And Titus is also instructed in this realm as well.

It's time to provide the proper nourishment in other people's life. Just as a fish is prepared to be fed, to feed someone else, and prepared upon a platter to provide nourishment, so is an elder.

[39 : 15] And so in section three, in the last section today, is elders. For the instruments of nourishment. For the instruments of nourishment. In verse 9 it says, 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.

Verse 9 says to hold firm. Hold firm. This highlights devotion to something. In this case, being devoted to the word as taught, no matter what the cost.

Standing upon what the Bible says, no matter what the cost. To hold firm, it is being rooted and grounded upon the identity of God's calling, regardless of an elder's popularity.

Regardless of applause, because the only applause comes from the Lord above. And quite honestly, church, you may not know it, but usually the only applause that an elder often gets is the applause from the Lord.

And it's unfortunate, and that's not to bring a guilt trip or anything, but it's the reality. This is a very, very interesting office that only elders, if you serve as an elder, you only know the unique challenges that you're up against.

[40 : 46] When you go to prayer and war in the unseen spiritual realm in this life, and you go to war for the church and the life of the church, and we go to war for you when we're on our knees praying for you in the hospital, it's exhausting.

It really is. And it's not like we go on Facebook and say, look at me. I'm praying for my church. No. The right doesn't know what the left is doing.

Because our applause only comes from the Lord. And often it's the only one that we get. And this firm identity in the Lord expresses itself as it fulfills the role of this office.

In administration of nourishment, we see in this passage, we see that the administration of nourishment is kind of twofold. It's to give instruction that brings an understanding that elders are to be able to teach.

Just as 1 Timothy 3 verse 2 says, able to teach as a qualifier in 1 Timothy. But teach what? The nourishment is to be administered through teaching in sound doctrine and also rebuking.

[41 : 55] Now, sound doctrine is something to be known and to be understood as healthy teaching. This also brings about the subject of teaching flowing from the Lord himself. If everything that we receive, we're giving away as stewards.

We know that we are receiving the word of God and we're delivering it according to what the Lord desires. This is healthy teaching. Biblical teaching. The teaching ministry of an elder must be found upon the word of God rather than opinion, not the opinion of the world.

The teaching of an elder is to be built upon and expressed through the word of God, not the opinions of the world. I shouldn't be up here with a newspaper reading that to you and instructing you in that manner.

Obviously, the Bible relates to everything going on in the newspaper. And honestly, everybody just needs Jesus. Amen. They need hope and they need a church that lives and is organized in the way that Paul is commissioning Titus.

And Titus is commissioning everyone in the Crete. The world needs to see this. They need what we have. We also see that the heart of Titus seems to be sound teaching.

[43 : 03] It's a heart of joy as a Christian. Sound teaching. It's a nourishment of holiness. It's a pattern of love. It's a fuel of worship. It equips us. It emboldens us for evangelism.

In other words, at the forefront of the role of an elder or pastor or overseer, it is to be a devotion to knowledge. And expressing that knowledge for building up others and nourishing their souls.

Which brings me back to my main point today. The sustenance of the church is provided through the work of church elders. And we also see in this passage, rebuke.

The administration of teaching sound doctrine, but also administering rebuke. Meaning to expose, to convict. You know, no one likes to receive a bad diagnosis from a doctor.

I don't think anybody does. If you are, if you do like getting back to diagnosis from a doctor, I don't understand you. But nobody likes to get a bad diagnosis from a doctor. Nobody likes to go to the doctor and hear that they have high blood pressure.

[44 : 10] Nobody likes to go to the doctor and say that you need to lose 20 pounds. You're going to die. Nobody likes to go to the doctor and get a diagnosis of cancer. Now, that doctor could honestly just, you know, continue his merry way.

He sees that smile of that hope coming into that room. And he could say, you're fine. Yeah, let's celebrate. And you go home and you're typing on Facebook of how just excited you are.

You just got the best news of your life. You're fine. And six months later, you're dead. So an elder must rebuke. No one likes to receive a bad diagnosis from a doctor.

But how important it is for that doctor to be straightforward with you. To be straightforward with you. And say, based upon the evidence that is appearing to us as elders within your life.

According, holding it up to the standard of scripture. Your life and your health is at stake. You're headed for danger. Now, we can lie for the sake of peace.

[45 : 19] This is the verse that says, peace, peace where there is no peace. A faithful elder, pastor, overseer, according to verse 9, is a teacher and defender. A preacher and he's a physician.

Okay? His role is to consistently be responsible to comfort. But also to confront. Okay? Okay? And this is hard. Often holding firm to the word is not popular.

As you can imagine. Nobody often likes that doctor and his diagnosis right when he's diagnosing. You probably hate him for trying to change your habits and diet and eating.

Saying that you have to lose all of your hair to undergo chemo. Nobody likes a doctor at that moment. But, man, if the doctor helps you to overcome something that has lifelong effects, you're a fan of that doctor.

You look back and thank that doctor for that diagnosis. They say, if you want people to like you, don't be a pastor, but sell ice cream.

[46 : 24] If you want people to like you, don't be a pastor, sell ice cream. Everyone will love you. Right? Unless you're lactose intolerant. It is often, church, confronting sin or false teaching that makes pastors very unpopular.

When you are confronting sin, when you're confronting some false teaching, that is when, all of a sudden, the applause starts to fade. Where that steadfastness comes into play.

Are you going to be devoted to the applause or are you going to be devoted to what the Lord has called you to do? The truth is, it is often the most difficult thing to call out those whom we care about the most.

I know this very personally. It is so difficult to call out the people whom we care about the most. Because you know it's going to cause a wake in the relationship.

You know it's going to cause probably anger at times. You know there's going to be some sort of response that you're praying that somebody is going to be a little bit gracious towards you.

[47 : 38] The marching of the elder is balanced and biblical. An agenda that's based upon the Bible to encourage, to refute for the sake of others, just as Colossians 128 says.

We proclaim him, warning and teaching everything with all wisdom so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. And guess what? That's no matter what the cost. No matter the applause.

No matter how somebody responds when you confront them based on their sin. And that's the lonely road of an elder. I hope this helps us understand what this office entails.

What this church votes upon when elders are called within our midst. To know what we're held accountable for as a plurality of elders.

The truth is, no one has fulfilled this office better than Jesus Christ himself. Jesus Christ instructs us to obey his commands and to abide in him.

[48 : 39] So we abide in him. By the grace of God. And these qualifications are requirements for this office. But they're also to be aims in your life.

Each and every person gathered here. Even you, Micah. The aims in your life. That you look upon this list and you look in the mirror just as elders do every waking moment at times.

How are we doing in this? The local church should heed these qualities seriously. So I do have four challenges for you today. And I have gone a little bit long.

Believe it or not, I was anticipating my sermon only being about a half hour. That's a joke. But we have four challenges for us today.

I think I have them listed on the screen as well. I don't know. Dom, if you can put them on the screen. Four challenges.

[49 : 40] I want us to consistently pray for your elders. And pray for more elders. I want you to pray for elders. I want you to pray for elders consistently.

And pray for more elders. Secondly, I want you to encourage you to consistently encourage. Be the source of encouragement in the elder's life.

Not discouragement. Number three, consistently be striving. Strive to the character and quality of the life of an elder. That elders are required to live.

And the church ought to aim for. And I also encourage you to consistently be present. In God's plans of ministry within our church.

Obviously, we're in the middle of a pandemic. It looks a little bit different than historically looking. But there's still a participation. Be present.

[50 : 36] Consistently be present in God's plans of ministry within our church. Dedicate yourself to Bible studies here. The Lord has us on a plan of development and maturity.

Specifically geared. He has a discipleship plan for our church. So we ought to all be called and feel convicted when we're not participating in our own church's Bible studies at times.

Or when we're not praying with the prayer ministry at times. Dedicate yourself to Bible studies.

Members meetings. Conduct your lives making the church a priority and mandatory.

Knowing that if you want your house to be in order. You've got to get your life in order according to this. Where else are you getting that? Where else are you getting that administration of nourishment.

Other than the sustenance that is provided through the church elders at church. On Sunday mornings. Through the preaching of his word. Through Bible studies. Why? Because when the church owns their responsibilities individually and corporately.

[51 : 37] This is how he builds his army. The Lord is building his army at Youngstown Metro. Are we a part of it? Are we kind of just like, oh, I've got a little bit of a, you know, excuse to kind of miss church today.

Or, oh, I woke up at 1030 and I got all this stuff to do just to attend a live stream. Plenty. Submit to the teaching of the ministry of the word.

Regardless of the excuse. It does not take very long to read the news and observe the chaotic and confusion society that we look at. And they're looking for hope and we have hope. And the world needs it.

So we ought to live a life bearing that very same hope. The Lord has called you to greater things. Than just to be a good husband or wife or father or mother.

And they are important. But he has given you an everlasting identity within the mission of his church here and now at Youngstown Metro. Don't waste your life with misprioritization. You are his church.

[52 : 40] We ought to live like it. It starts putting into order what remains for us just as Titus in Crete here and now for us today. Please pray with me. Let's pray with you.

Let's pray with you. Take a while. soaked in what maybe you have a unbelievable story of your church. You are the one very first. I love you. What am I going to say? Please pray with you. Let me pray with you to speak with you. Thank you. I love you. Let me pray with you.
Let me pray with you. Let me pray. I didn't say about you. Let me pray that which I might have been waiting for you. If you have me if you are going to be amazing or not this will be amazing or not this will be fun now. Let me pray with you. Let me pray with you.
We pray with you.