

Eldership Requirements

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[0:00] Alright, so we are going to be speaking, or I'm going to be speaking on the qualification of elders this morning. And one of the things that is especially pertinent to us as a church plant is we are still in a position of needing to appoint elders.

Josh is the church planter, he planted this church, he's the apostolic church planter, but at this point we still have yet to appoint elders. And even though that's a very rare thing by way of congregations in this day and age, some of the passages, as you guys will see, is this is a very common thing in the New Testament.

Both of the main passages we're going to be reading from, one to Timothy, disciple of Paul, another one to Titus, disciple of Paul, are both instructions so as to clarify to them who were the men that they should be appointing in these many different flocks and congregations that still needed elders in them.

When the word of God went forth after Jesus died and was raised from the dead in Pentecost, there were many, many converts, and there were just a massive need for the appointing of shepherds and elders over these flocks.

So one of the things that benefit to us is we have very specific passages that really, really pertain to exactly a need we have right now. You know, there's many different passages in scriptures that refer to many different struggles we may have in life. Some are ultra specific.

[1:32] Fortunately, these are ultra specific to us. It's especially important in the day and age that we live in, where there are many ways that a person can acquire the title of pastor.

And there's a great degree to which very few, I would say that one of the big needs in the church more broadly, is to have more reference towards what the Lord considers a qualified person, rather than the methods of men.

We even have the title of pastor. It has been set up as something that is entirely a career path. You can go to school for it, graduate school, and as a result of a diploma, you now you make yourself eligible to be hired. Which is, I would say, an exact example, as we'll get to, of what the Lord condemns and says not to do.

Okay. We are not talking about hired hands. We are talking about men who shepherd the flock of God. I think by way of analogy, you can even think of this as there's a massive difference between a mother and her relationship to her kids, and a nanny and her relationship to those kids.

[2:51] One of them is hired, and only there because they're being compensated. And the other one, this is their very children. This is their very life. And there's an extent to which the relationship with an elder or pastor in the flock is something of a familial relationship.

And so, if we get it wrong, it can feel like a hired hand. It can feel and be like a stepparent, like not an actual legitimate relationship of pure ownership, where you are mine and I am yours.

And you get this right. It's actually a very, very powerful role. One of the things my father-in-law said one time that really stuck with me is he said, Fathers and pastors have an ability to wound people incomparable to other roles.

And I think part of that is because there's a little bit of a mystery and that the Lord, there is something about the character of the Lord that can be demonstrated through fathers and subsequently be demonstrated to the fatherly role of the pastor.

And so, one of the great edifiers, builders up, sanctifiers of the church is when we get it right in terms of appointing men who are actually qualified for the Lord, rather than going the Lord's way on this, rather than going maybe some of the other ways in which these things are done in this day and age.

[4:19] With that said, there's a big distinction between people who have a title versus people who have been appointed by God.

And what my hope is, by the end of this, we will really be built up in how the Lord views these things and maybe even dispel.

One of the things that was really powerful for me in my mid-20s, I was really disillusioned by the church because of a lot of the church leadership I'd been under, I would say, more of like step-parent vibes rather than legitimate parent vibes.

Like a lot of wounding. One of the things that was really helpful for me is when I dug into the qualification of elders, I realized that a lot of those people were actually just never qualified in the first place. Like a bunch of people gave them that title.

They were actually never qualified for the Lord. And it freed me up actually how we have more forgiveness towards them because it was like they were never a legitimate parent anyway. You know what I mean? I was expecting something from them that the Lord, the Lord hadn't appointed them to that position.

[5:17] A bunch of people just didn't type. They freed me up. But with that said, on the flip side, it's a really good thing for us to get right. And I think that there are also, there's also another ditch.

There's one ditch which is using a way of qualifying people that isn't pertaining to scripture. But on the flip side of things, this is a very high bar and we are still appointing real people, real men.

You know what I mean? And there's an extent to which we can pendulum swing from maybe some of the ways in which a, there's almost like a worldly way in which we can qualify elders just like, you know, men who went to seminary, things like this.

But also you can pendulum swing and be so perfectionistic in your examination of people that no one's like you would never approve anyone. You know what I mean?

And the reality is Jesus is our chief shepherd. Jesus is the good shepherd. And real men are shepherds of real flocks.

[6:20] You know what I mean? Real broken men. And so we're going to go through these passages and hopefully be built up. And hopefully, yeah, hopefully this will make a deep imprint on all of us so as to be able to do these things in a way that is the Lord's way and not man's way.

Even as you were talking about sacred versus secular. You know what I mean? So I'm going to try to say, you know what I mean? Less. Less. I usually, I'm usually about 20 times, about like once every other kind of guy.

I'm trying to read it in. All right. I'm going to start in John 10. This is Jesus talking about the good shepherd. John 10, starting in verse 1.

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in another way, that man is a thief and robber. So there's a way to be in proximity to the sheep that is the right way. There's another way that is skirting over the right way. But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep. To him, the gatekeeper opens. There's a gatekeeper for the right way to be in the fold that a shepherd takes.

[7:40] The sheep hear his voice. And he calls his own sheep by name and leaves them out.

So he has a familiarity with them. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them and the sheep follow him.

They know his voice. One of the things that happens when a mother first gives birth to a child is that child already has one skill in their tool belt. They already recognize their voice.

There is a nearness. There is an appropriate pastoral nearness that sheep should have. They should know his voice. Again, intimacy. This is near. This is a man who is near.

A stranger they will not follow. This is a person that is not a stranger, though. A stranger they will not follow. But they will flee from him.

[8:39] For they do not know the voice of strangers. This figure of speech Jesus used with them. But they did not understand what he was saying to them. So Jesus again said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.

All who come before me are thieves and robbers. Are thieves and robbers. But the sheep do not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved.

And will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. I want that to be crystallized in our mind. In the manner of speaking, this is the definition of a shepherd. It is he who lays down his life for the sheep. This is actually extremely masculine. This is very, very similar to the commandments to husbands to lay down their life for their wife.
[9:48] This role, this role of being a shepherd, and in many ways, obviously exemplified by Jesus, is a call to willingly and selflessly lay down your life.

The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees. The wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd.

I know my own, and my own know me. Just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father. I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold.

I must bring them also. And they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock and one shepherd. For this reason, the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again.

[10:55] No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I want you guys to remember this, because it's going to come up again in multiple other passages.

But there is a willingness. Jesus displays a willingness to lay down his life. He is not being coerced into this. He willingly and eagerly pours out his life for the sheep.

He willingly lays down his life for the sheep. The Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.

I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father. So this is something of a prophecy and a definition of good shepherd that comes from Jesus.

And the reason I read this passage is it, to some extent, actually captures what Jesus is talking about when he's talking about shepherd. It kind of defines the role of a shepherd over a flock.

[11:57] And it also is a prophecy, not only about the good shepherd lays down his life, but it's also a prophecy that he will lay down his life and take it back up again. What happens is Jesus actually goes to the cross.

Right before he goes to the cross, though, he reiterates the same point. Peter says, surely you're not going to die, Lord. The Lord corrects him. And then also, Jesus tells Peter that he's going to deny him.

Because Jesus, again, gives another prophecy. He strikes the shepherd, and all the sheep will scatter. Peter's like, of course I wouldn't. But then Jesus tells him, before the rooster crows, you have denied him three times.

Peter's like, of course, then. What happens? Jesus goes to be crucified. And Peter does, in fact, deny him three times. So now I'm going to hop down to, this might be all over a surprising passage, but I think it ties into the whole theme of shepherding.

This is John 21, starting in verse 15. This is after Jesus has risen from the dead, and he's appearing to the disciples. This is his appearing to Peter. John 21, starting in verse 15.

[13:09] When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these? He said, yes, Lord. You know that I love you. And he said to him, feed my lambs.

He said to him a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love me? He said to him, yes, Lord. You know that I love you. And he said to him, tend my sheep. Then he said to him a third time, Simon, son of John, do you love me?

Peter was grieved because he said to him a third time, do you love me? And he said to him, Lord, you know everything. And you know that I love you. Jesus said to him, feed my sheep. Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted.

But when you were old, you will stretch out your hand, and another will dress you and carry you where you will not want to go. So this was said to show what kind of death he would glorify God in. And after saying this, he said to him, follow me. So one of the things that happens here is Jesus, to some extent, is inquiring, do you love me?

[14:12] And Peter's answering sincerely. And his response is an interesting response because he's wanting him to actually care for his sheep. Demonstrate your love for me in that I want you to

tend the sheep.

I want you to feed the sheep. There's something of a pastoral mantle that's being given to Peter. One of the things that's interesting about Peter, of the apostles who write New Testament books, he identifies himself multiple times, not by using the term apostle, though he was, but actually the term elder.

He had a strong identity as an elder and as a shepherd. And the reason I bring this up is Jesus is pointing out, or Jesus is emphasizing to Peter, even as Peter is receiving this pastoral mantle, that the reason, the genesis of this mantle and calling to Peter is because Peter actually does love the Lord.

I think that one of the things that needs to be in place is that a lot of the heart of laying down your life for the flock needs to first come from your genuine love for the Lord.

That is who the Lord is calling. Those who actually love him. Right? Now turning to 1 Peter chapter 5, starting in verse 1.

[15:37] I'm doing all of the passages that are not the normal passages on this first. Then we're going to get to the ones you guys all know. Ten to three times. Okay, so 1 Peter chapter 5, starting in verse 1.

So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness to the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is to be revealed.

Speaking to elders. Shepherd the flock of God that is among you. So he is tying in here the term elder and the term shepherd. Shepherd these terms are used synonymously in the New Testament. And before I continue with this passage, the term elder is not only used in the New Testament, it's also used in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament the term elder means beard. Which is another way of saying a mature man.

That's the way the term is used in the Old Testament. In the New Testament the term elder is used as well. In the New Testament the term itself means senior or mature or veteran.

[16:45] The term elder that then Peter is tying in here to shepherd is by definition people who are mature in the faith.

One of the things that Paul says to Timothy, who is an elder, Paul says to Timothy, don't let people despise you for your youth.

The term elder is a reference to maturity. It's not necessarily a reference to age. It's very associated with age. But it's distinctly referencing a mature believer rather than an immature believer.

It's distinctly referencing a veteran of the faith. Someone who is a senior, not a junior. An elder, not a younger. Also, even as the term means beard or man, mature man, Jesus' definition, what is a good shepherd?

He who lays down his life for the sheep. There is something distinctly masculine about the definition of good shepherd that is also tied in with the definition of being an elder.

[17:58] There is an aspect of masculinity when it matures that is able to willingly lay down its life. That's why husbands are called to lay down their life.

And shepherds are defined as those who lay down their life for the sheep. Almost all of the qualifications we're going to go over, actually I would say basically all of them, are either qualifications that pertain to sin issues or maturity.

And I think this should be an encouragement to any of you who aspire to this. That's really good news. Because it means that both of those things we can trust the Lord for.

We can trust the Lord to mature us and we can trust the Lord to sanctify us and set us free from sin. None of these things are unachievable qualifications. Right? None of these things are you have to have blue eyes.

Right? None of these things are things that like, unless the Lord endow you with some unique attribute, none of these are you have to be thus and so tall. It's all sin or immaturity.

[19:06] And I also would say that even if you don't aspire to be an elder, this list of definitions and qualifications really pertains to the maturity of all men.

I think all husbands and all fathers, it is a good thing to examine yourself by way of defining what it means to be mature in accordance with the faith. Even if you don't want to, even if you do not have eagerness towards the call of being a shepherd, you are still called to shepherd your wife.

You are still called to shepherd your children. Okay? All right. As well as partakers of the glory that is to be revealed.

Shepherd the flock of God that is among you. Exercising oversight, not under compulsion. This is exactly, this is the same exact idea that Jesus talked about.

No one was forcing him to lay down his life. He did it willingly. Not under compulsion, but willingly as God would have you. Not for shameful gain.

[20 : 09] Again, this is going to come up multiple times here. There are ulterior motives for why we would be in this position. There are ulterior motives that have driven many people to acquire the office of eldership without the qualification of eldership.

Because there is like many, many people want to be the guy who's recognized on stage. Many people want the prestige. They actually did a survey. Actually, I meant to look this up before I'm pretty sure.

But they just did a survey. There's like some psychological survey of behavioral disorders in career paths. And they did a survey of narcissists. And they found that being American pastors is one of the most highly, the likeliest career paths that a narcissist would take.

Why is that? It's for the glory. There is very selfish reasons why people can acquire these positions. I've seen this. I've seen this.

It's called shameful gain. Not for shameful gain. But eagerly. Not domineering over those who are charged. But being examples to the flock. Peter is defining the primary mode of influence shepherd to flock.

[21 : 19] It's not using your office to lord it over people. It's by being an example to the flock. Okay. This is why it's so important, these character qualifications.

Because even in our own lives, isn't it more persuasive when someone just is an example of something? Rather than someone who's constantly giving us maybe even true counsel. But actually not having the character displayed in their own life.

Being an example to the flock. And when the chief shepherd appears. Okay. I like that term chief shepherd. And when the chief shepherd appears.

You will receive the unfading crown of glory. Likewise, you who are younger. So this is the contrast here. Be subject to the elders.

So there's a contrast here between people who are young in the faith and people who are more mature in the faith. And it's saying specifically, those who are younger or more immature be subject to the elders.

[22 : 24] You might ask the question, wait, shouldn't everybody be subject to the elders? There is a manner of speaking that we are commanded to submit to our elders, obviously. but you do not need to babysit an adult.

We do need to know where we are in the faith and there is a place where we need to, even as Paul says, follow me as I follow Christ. There is stages of faith. There is a need for discipleship for those who are weaker and more immature and there is a way in which they need to distinctly be, what is it, how does it say it?

Be subject to the elders. We want to exalt those by way of example who are more mature and we want those who are more immature to be looking to those people more specifically, right?

It's a beautiful thing. This is how the body is built up and matured. Close yourselves, all of you, with humility towards one another.

God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. All right, now we're going to go over to 1 Timothy 3, starting in verse 1.

[23 : 36] This is a trustworthy saying. If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task.

The term overseer and elder is used interchangeably here. Therefore, actually, and one thing to note here, it is a noble thing to aspire to eldership.

It is a good thing. For anyone who does aspire to it, you need to hear that. It's actually really a good thing. I think one of the things that can happen sometimes when we read through these qualifications is there can be a level of discouragement.

I actually would say to you men who do aspire to these things, it is a noble thing to aspire to, and it's actually a really powerful thing for us to examine our lives with humility before the Lord that the Lord would build us up, even irregardless of if we are qualified and appointed as elders, just for our own maturity and sanctification in the Lord.

It's a noble and good thing to aspire to be an elder. And I would just encourage you guys who are feeling that eagerness to rise to the occasion, to embrace it as a challenge.

[24:47] All right. Therefore, an overseer must be above reproach. This term is used both in Paul's letter to Timothy as well as in his letter to Titus.

Above reproach can sound like he must be perfect. What that's specifically referring to, another translation is, he is without legitimate charge.

This is a catch-all for Christian sin. If we have ongoing sin in our life, if we have skeletons in the closet, we are disqualified as an elder. This does not mean no one ever has anything bad against you or no issue against you, period.

It's that there's no legitimate charge against you, there's no legitimate charge of persistent sin in your life. There's no charge of broken relationships in your life.

This is a catch-all for just Christian expectation. You know, there's no area where you distinctly are needing to, like you have bondage of and you need to be free of, distinctly, right?

[25:49] There's no legitimate charge that can be brought against you. Now, I will say that it is almost entirely the case that perhaps anyone who is brought before the church as an elder, there will be people that just don't like them or have things they don't like about them.

That's why in the definition of this term, there's no legitimate charge. It's not to say there aren't people who don't like you. Probably if there's no one who doesn't like you, you're probably just a massive people pleaser, which is probably also disqualifying.

The reality is you can be in a position of being above reproach. There's no legitimate charge that can be brought against you. The husband of one wife.

Duh. Some of these I'm just going to go through, guys. All right. Sober-minded. So, yeah, being someone who's not tossed around in their mind.

Someone who has a groundedness in the way that they think about things. Who's so reminded. Who's self-controlled. I actually love the term self-control. One of the things that on the more reformed side of things, you'll hear people say is people talk about being, have not have self-control, but have God control.

[26:56] But it's interesting. The fruit of the Spirit actually says self-control. It doesn't say God control. The Lord actually has made us and fashioned us in such a way that our hearts can actually be purified and be so much like Him that actually it's part of His character displayed that we actually have self-control.

Also, that mature aspect of the Holy Spirit is something that is a qualifier of being an elder.

Not only is it an attribute of the Holy Spirit, self-control doesn't say God control, it says self-control. But also, it's a qualifier. We need to be self-controlled in order to be qualified as an elder.

Respectable.

And then, this is one of my favorites. There's a handful of things that are stereotypes of pastors that are actually disqualifying. And this is one of them. It uses the term hospitable.

Okay, so when we say hospitable, a lot of times what we think is southern hospitality and the ability to host. What this word means, and actually hospitality essentially exclusively in Scripture means, is being a lover of strangers.

[28:01] That's what it means. This is entirely talking about your relationship to strangers. There's a stereotype of American pastors, ivory tower pastors, there are men who are inaccessible, except for those who are like in the in crowd.

Okay, that is disqualifying. Okay, you should be a lover of strangers. This is a good question for us even who do aspire to ask ourselves. For the strangers in our life, how would they describe us?

Would they describe us as someone who loves strangers? Right? It's a good challenge. Spiritual hospitality, the kind of hospitality the Lord calls us to, is something that takes strangers and welcomes them into the family of God.

Okay? It isn't just, it's not, it's not that small town mentality that's like stranger danger. I care about all the people that I've spent a lot of time with in this small town that I know, but like, you know, stay away from a stranger.

That's disqualifying. Okay? Hospitality. Able to teach. I feel like, again, this is one of those ones where it's probably the most emphasized attribute in American pastors.

[29:10] This is actually one of the things I think that really failed in the Acts 29 movement, like Mark Driscoll's movement, is they put such emphasis on having what they call a strong pulpit. They

just really found men who were just really compelling speakers and ignored all the other qualifications.

And the reality is, the scripture actually doesn't say be excellent in teaching. It doesn't say being, you know, this person who is uniquely gifted in teaching.

It just says able to teach. And I think there's something that's also achievable about this. I think virtually any man, maybe not any man, but the vast majority of men can actually acquire the skill of being able to teach.

And as husbands and as fathers, we're already called to teach. Now, there are some people that are such poor communicators that they just, it's like, oh man, I just, I never understand.

I want so much to learn from you, but you know, and you know what? We should be able to teach, but it actually is not giving a super high standard in this qualification. It's just saying able to teach.

[30:13] It's like, are you able to drive? So my daughter is not able to drive. But Sam, are you able to drive? Yes, you're able to drive. Okay. It's not saying, you know what I mean? You don't need to be qualified as a NASCAR driver.

You're able to. Hopefully, hopefully safe. Hopefully, safely able to drive. All right. Not a drunkard. Also, duh. Some of these are maturity issues and some of these are sin issues. Not violent, but gentle. I think this is also a really powerful attribute.

There is, maybe not a full-on stereotype, but there is an association with men and authority and not being gentle. This office requires gentleness.

This office requires gentleness. Again, I think this office is very fatherly. A lot of these descriptors are very fatherly. You know what I mean? You might not want a general in the military to be distinctly gentle, but a father does need to be gentle.

[31:18] A husband does need to be gentle. A pastor does need to be gentle. Not violent, but gentle. Not quarrelsome. Again, I think that there is such a fatherly role here in not creating this contentious atmosphere.

Not this quarrelsome atmosphere. Someone who's able to speak the truth in love. Someone who's able to deal with issues, but not create additional issues. There's a quarrelsomeness and a not gentleness that actually creates a lot of tension, right?

This is even a good question for us in our homes. How are we in our homes? Is our home full of tension and strife? Or is it our home full of peace? Are we able to facilitate an atmosphere where issues are dealt with gently?

Right? And then also, it says not quarrelsome and not a lover of money. I feel like this goes into the whole hired hand thing.

The church I went to in high school was a bunch of career pastors that were very well paid. Well, actually, no, not all of them. But a lot of them were.

[32:28] And a lot of them were on like a, there is a whole career path that's associated with, you know, first you started out as a youth pastor, you know, you have a seminary. And then you climb the megachurch ladder.

You know what I mean? And a lot of these megachurches are actually driven by money. They're much, they're much more similar to a business. And how the Lord describes a church now, it's not a dog on everybody. You know what I mean?

That's not always the case. And that's not even a dog on having a larger congregation. But it's very, the scripture is covering these things because they're very easy things to get into. Right?

Not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well with all dignity, keeping his children submissive.

For if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? So there's an extent to which we're even defining good authority here.

[33:29] You're someone who distinctly is leading and having charge of your home and your home is orderly and your children are under your authority. This is again one of those ones where it is a stereotype of pastors for their kids to be crazy.

Right? That's one of the stereotypes of American pastors. The PK, the PK stereotype is kids who are crazy. That is men who are disqualified. I wonder how, I would love to see how different the stereotypes were if like the Lord just divinely removed the title of every single person who's disqualified across the United States and how different the stereotypes would be because the reality is so much of the stereotype is actually just disqualifying.

It's just revealing that these men are not actually qualified. And the reasoning here is so good. If he cannot manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?

Which is a giant no-brainer. It's obvious. Very, very obvious here. If you aren't able to do this well in your own home, how can you do that for the church? Right?

He who is faithful in little will be faithful in much. It's very tempting for us to just hop over things. It's really easy because I would say the honor and nobility of some of these titles and roles to do the thing where you're interviewing for the job and you're trying to get away with as much as possible so you can just land the gig.

[35:01] This is before the Lord. You can fool men that way and many men do fool men that way but you're never fooling God. Right? And I think that this is one of those categories of things where we need to actually do this before God.

Right? He must not be a recent convert. Again, a reference to immaturity. He must be an elder, not a younger. He must not be a recent convert or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil.

Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders. This is a really interesting one because it's really easy in church culture especially when really tight to have that small town mentality and not only have like a little bit of like the stranger danger but also to care a lot about the relationships in your bubble and care nothing about the relationships outside of your bubble.

And so the people who know you at work you do not have a good reputation for. Right? Because you care a lot about your reputation and care a lot about your relationships with people in your bubble in your friend group but outside of that who cares?

This is disqualifying. This is disqualifying. We should have a good, not only that we also, I should say this as well, we also should have a relationship with people who are outsiders. Right? We should actually, this is also assuming that we aren't in such a bubble.

[36:20] We're not like you know some homeschool kid who's never had friends outside of you know family members. Right? We who aspire should have a relationship with outsiders and it should be a good one.

So that he may not fall into disgrace into a snare of the devil. Okay, I'm going to skip over to Titus now.

I was going to read the end of Timothy. One thing it does say at the end of Timothy is it says to not be hasty in the laying on of hands. It's really important that we do this right and it's really important to not be in a hurry because when we do this right it's so glorifying to God and there is an extent to which it can be tempting to just be hasty and kind of get people into the position.

One of the protections for elders as it says at the end of Timothy is to not be hasty in the laying on of hands and that's in context to Paul says to Timothy that you should rebuke an elder openly before the entire congregation that they may fear but it requires upon the testimony of two or three witnesses.

So there's a high standard for bringing an accusation against an elder. One of the reasons we need to be not hasty in the laying on of hands is that when we call a qualified man he would actually be qualified because once he's in that position there's actually a pretty high burden of proof he's in this until proven guilty and we're not just going to yank this person out of that position just because some people don't like him.

[37:56] You know what I'm saying? Anyway, I just did it. I just said you know what I'm saying. Shame on me. That might have been the only time I've said it. That's improvement.

You guys can't see you can mature. All right. So our last passage. Titus 1 starting in verse 5. This is why I left you in Crete so that you might put what remained in order and appoint elders in every town as I directed you. So again very similar here. There's a bunch of churches in these different towns that don't have elders and he has instruction of how to interpret and find these men and appoint them.

Okay? This very much pertains to us in every town as I directed you. If anyone is above reproach notice he says the same thing first in both of them. First and foremost where are you with sin as a believer?

Are you persisting in sin? Are there any charges that can be brought against you? Do you have skeletons in the closet? First and foremost where are you with sin as a believer?

[39:09] Are you someone who continues in sin or are you someone who repents of sin? If anyone is above reproach the husband of one wife yet again one wife guys and his children are believers

and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination again are your children in order?

Is your household in order? There's something about the sincere faith of a parent demonstrating its authority and influence and being seen in the lives of the children.

We want to see healthy children. We don't want to see insubordinate children. Again, stares up to the pastor's kid. This is disqualifying. We want to see kids who's...

I think this is even one of the things that can happen. Again, this is kind of reference to the narcissism. The pastoral role oftentimes is so image focused that the kids grow up feeling like their whole identity is their image.

This is not a healthy atmosphere for acquiring sincere faith where everything's just cleaning the outside of the cup. Is your faith cleaning the inside of the cup or is your faith cleaning the outside of the cup? Because that will reproduce itself in your children.

[40:16] Are you being an example to the flock of sincere faith or are you being an example of insincerity where you're just cleaning the outside of the cup and just caring what people think all the time and trying to acquire the fame of the role rather than being someone who lays down his life in the sheet.

These are very, very different things. Shows up in your children and not over to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. For an overseer as God's steward must be above reproach.

This is the third time Paul has brought up being above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered. Again, the quick-tempered a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain.

So this is another reference to like selfish ambition or shameful gain. It is so easy. Why are people in these positions that aren't qualifying? Because of these things.

They have an ulterior motive. They have an ulterior motive for why they're in it. Right? Greedy for gain. This is about them. This isn't about laying down in their life. This is about something they could gain. They would not be so.

[41:25] But hospitable. Once again, you're in this chip to strangers. A lover of good. Self-controlled. upright. Upright. Holy.

And disciplined. And this is really cool too. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught. I think this, I really like this.

Hold firm to the trustworthy word. This also is a marker of maturity. You can see people who are young in the faith and they don't have, they are not able to hold firmly to the word.

They're still in the phase where they are learning from others. There's also an extent to which you can get to a place where you're not just parroting what mom and dad are saying. You actually know what the word of God says.

You know what God himself says. And you're in a mature place where you don't need to be fed milk. You're on the meat. You're on the meat. And there is a trust. He holds firmly to the trustworthy word.

[42:29] We, a sign of maturity in the faith is when you are holding, you are holding firmly to the trustworthy word. May we be there. Now here's the thing.

With the qualification of elders, there is a contrast here. There are people who are young in the faith. And they're not there yet. That's appropriate. That's appropriate. You don't need to be somewhere where you're not.

But when we're discriminating here, we are looking for these attributes. Holding firmly to the trustworthy word as taught so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also rebuke those who contradict it.

This is someone who is not parroting other people. This is someone who is advocating on behalf of the Lord. And even one of the interesting ones is you have Paul who is an apostle but he's much less known than the apostles in Jerusalem.

And he returns to Jerusalem. There's a controversy around circumcision and Peter was separating himself and Paul had so much confidence before the Lord that he rebuked Peter who is perhaps the most influential of all the apostles in the entire world.

[43:37] He had the confidence before God because he knew how to hold firmly to the trustworthy word. God is ultimately who he was able to hold firmly to in those moments and Peter humbled himself.

He was right. There is a place where someone who is maturing faith is accountable to God. They're accountable to God and they're able to hold others accountable to God.

They're able to give instruction in sound doctrine. They're able to advocate for sound doctrine and also rebuke those who contradict it. These are markers of maturity.

And so with all this to say, we are obviously a church plant and we're wanting to appoint elders. I would say for you guys, it's really good for us to have conviction around what the scripture says on these matters and also have a good enough definition of what the scripture is saying here that we actually can be interpreters.

Okay? When the scripture says that a person should be above approached, you're one of the people that needs to raise your hand. A lot of times when these things happen, there are people that don't raise their hand.

[44:42] That actually is one of the things that perpetuates some of this unhealth in the church.

We as a church have an ability to peer into these things, have convictions about these things before the Lord and actually be a part of what Jesus said, the gatekeepers that allow the good shepherd to come in and be part of the flock.

That's what we want. Isn't that what we want? Right? Also, I'll say this is really good for us to have convictions on by way of rising to the challenge and rising to the occasion and actually having that acknowledging the calling of an elder as being a noble calling.

It is a noble calling. We need to have convictions about what the scripture is even talking about when it references that. It's a good thing. It's a good thing for people to aspire to eldership. It's also something that oftentimes, most of the time, there needs to be a lot of maturing and sanctification. There needs to be a lot of repentance. I believe that one of the biggest gaps in the church is good shepherding. I also believe that people way underestimate how much the Lord can sanctify and set people free and actually fill that gap in good shepherding.

And my hope is that some of this will inspire you guys, but also that you will have belief in your heart and confidence in your heart that the Lord not only can appoint these in our midst, but also can sanctify for those of you who are eager and sanctify your hearts unto these things.

[46:13] There actually is hope for being qualified. This is not such a high standard that it's unachievable for the Lord. It is actually an achievable standard. This is an achievable standard. It's a high standard, but it is an achievable standard.

So I'm just going to go ahead and close and pour.