

Thinking Biblically About Leadership

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[0 : 00] First of all, I would like to thank you for your prayers.

! And one of the things that was very encouraging as I actually was driving up there, and I'm happy to announce that I didn't get a ticket this time, I have become very, very methodical about using my cruise control.

How many of you understand that, you know, I got my first, some of you don't know me, and I got my first ticket in 27 years a couple weeks ago, and I have become scrupulous about following the legal limit.

And when I asked for people to pray for me last week, because I was going to preach to pastors out in the country, I suppose some of you decided that you'd go ahead and throw in a freebie, and that is that I would obey the law.

Secondly, you did pray that God would help me in preaching the Word of God to men that have been called by the Spirit of God to be ministers of the gospel.

[1 : 22] And I am very thankful that, for one, I received a number of notes, texts in Facebook that were encouragement in advance. And then afterwards, when I came back, a number of you texted me, how did it go?

How did things happen to work out? And I am very thankful to tell you, without question, that it was a time of blessing both to me and to men who are my brothers in the Lord Jesus and preachers of righteousness.

And so, after having thanked you for that, I want you to turn in your Bibles now to Acts chapter 6, and I'll share a little story.

My wife is in the nursery, so she will not hear this unless you tell her. But this morning, as we were having time of prayer together, and if you think I'm a beggar for prayer here publicly, I want you to know that I'm a beggar at home as well.

And so, we were in the process of praying together, and she said, well, okay, and what's your day look like? I said, well, pray for me because I really need the Holy Spirit's enabling this morning as I preach.

[2 : 28] And she said, well, this is an easy one. She knew what I was going to preach on, and she said it was an easy one. And I said, oh, no, honey, there's no such thing as an easy one. And she said, well, what I mean is that you've actually preached on the importance of deacons before.

And I said, well, that is true, but I would never presuppose that there's such a thing as an easy sermon. Sometimes things are easy, but that's only in the flesh. And I am dependent upon the Holy Spirit.

I am dependent upon the Word of God. And I'm dependent upon your prayers. And so, when we take this passage, Acts chapter 6, and hold it and study it together, I trust that you will be multitasking.

One of the things you're doing is you're saying, oh, Lord, help him. And I do need that. But then you're also saying, oh, Lord, give me a teachable heart to hear and to allow the Word of God to make a difference in my life as well.

So, having said that publicly, it would be appropriate for us to just remind us again, our own hearts, we cannot do anything apart from the enabling of the Spirit.

[3 : 39] Let's pray. Father, we are so very thankful that as we gather together here as believers, we gather not because of habit or because that it's our history, but really we gather because of your work in drawing us out of the misery and the despicable condition of our sin and making us to be children of the living God.

And you've drawn us together this morning to engage in corporate worship and to sing joyfully and enthusiastically in the power of the Spirit of God and then to open up the Scriptures and in our opening the Word to have the Psalms resonating in our soul as we think, Open thou mine eyes that I might behold wondrous truths of thy law.

We're beggars and gladly so. And our request this morning is that your Spirit would enable us who are your children and believers to hear the things that we need to hear and to also be enabled and encouraged to make the changes that you want us to make.

I pray, Father, that as a result of our attention to the Word of God, there would be a growing passion in the hearts of men in particular to grow to be men that are qualified to serve in that high and noble office as a deacon.

We pray also that wives and mothers would be ambitious to see the men that they are either married to or the boys that they are in the process of nurturing and encouraging, that part of their ambition would be to raise up those boys to become men who serve the Bride of Christ and know the blessing that comes with being a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[5 : 25] And, Father, we do recognize that apart from you we can do nothing, and so we plead with you this morning to work in our midst that the Word of God would have free course.

That's our prayer. Amen. Well, in several weeks, actually, it's going to be the second Wednesday in December, which our Constitution stipulates is when we have our annual meeting.

We are going to get together, and one of the things that we're going to do is we are going to vote on the budget, and we have put the budget out well in advance so that all of you have an opportunity to look at it.

And our standard statement is this. If you have any questions, we want you to feel free to ask one of your pastors or to ask your deacon, and they will do their very best to help you understand the logic that went into the process of building the budget that we've presented to you for your consideration. But actually, the budget is by far the least important of the issues that we deal with. The more important issue is always the matter of choosing leadership. And we recognize that every year we are blessed to be able to come together as body of believers and carefully think about those who we would appoint to serve as our deacons in this fellowship.

[6 : 40] And for you who are visiting this morning, we're glad you're here. For you who are part of our fellowship over many, many years, let me tell you that I would encourage you to never take for granted the peaceableness and the equanimity that we have enjoyed in this fellowship.

It's not an accident. First of all, it is the ministry of the grace of God working in the hearts of people. And I think over the years that we have been in communion together as a body of believers and we mark the way in which this body has stayed together and been blessed through a number of the little turmoils that God's brought, and he's allowed.

I have to tell you that closing the Christian school was not an easy thing for any of us emotionally. I have to tell you that going through the changes in music and small group were things that were a challenge for us.

For you who this morning kind of arrived here and you see all we're doing, hey, we didn't get there without some heavy lifting and some careful, prayerful attention. I remember, and I've shared this before, I remember when I came home and I'd been praying about this for a while and I said to my wife, I said, honey, I think we're going to work at changing the music and we're also going to go to small group.

And you who don't know my wife, she's very on point. She says, why don't we go to another church and start over? And she was saying, that is going to be quite a lift. And I am so blessed.

[8 : 02] I am richly blessed by the men that you over the years have placed in positions of leadership because they are the ones that have worked together to maintain the unity of spirit and to help us as we've made these changes in progress.

And so as we come this morning to think about the matter of voting on men that will serve in this capacity, it is fitting for me to open up the scriptures and say, here, here's what God says.

And remind you that he's not left us comfortless and he's not left us without clear instruction as to what he looks for in those who would lead the bride of Christ.

So I want you to turn in your Bible to Acts chapter 6. In Acts chapter 6, it tells us there in verse 1, and let me just kind of read it to set the frame for you.

It says, Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily

distribution.

[9 : 07] And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty, and we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.

And what they said pleased the whole gathering. And they chose Stephen. And we work our way through the names that are there. And so as we look at this passage, I want us to kind of back up a little bit.

And before we actually look at the qualification that the Spirit of God has given to the bride of Christ, whereby we may make judgments as to those who we would appoint to serve and to be leaders in the body of Christ, let's take a moment, first of all, to consider that when we think about leadership, that it's a role that's been prepared by God.

The fact that we have in this situation a little difficulty in the church in Jerusalem is not atypical. I trust that you know when you get more than one person in a canoe, it becomes work.

When you are there by yourself paddling the old J-stroke and making reasonable progress and kind of doing your own thing, thinking whatever you are, it's not so tough. But the more people get involved in something, the more complicated it becomes.

[10 : 24] And as we see here in this passage in Acts 6, verse 1, it says, As the church grew, problems developed. And we understand actually in the passage that what had happened here is that the Gentile widows had been neglected.

I don't know whether it was intentional or not, but the fact of the matter is it did happen. And as a result of that, as you read in the passage, it says here that a complaint arose.

Now, I do want you to know that some people are appointed by God, it would seem to be professional complainers. I mean, every church is blessed by them, and I recognize that. And one of the things I've learned is that when they leave here, they go somewhere else and continue their ministry.

It's all right. You know, I accept that. They're a blessing. Honestly, I want you to know that I believe that God uses some people to test my character, and God uses some people to test yours.

And so there are some who just kind of, they arrive. I remember a dear man said to me, I want you to understand that I'm like a battery. I'm the negative part of this. How many of you understand when you use a battery, there's a positive and a negative?

[11 : 34] And he, with all freedom, told me that his responsibility was to be the negative end of the battery for me, and I thought, God bless you. So, there are some who have never seen anything that didn't deserve to be complained about.

But on the other hand, there are times when complaints are profitable and important to the well-being of a body, and things happen that deserve attention. And in this case, here was a situation that the apostles were missing, and appropriately so, people came and said, hey, we got a problem.

We need to do something about it. I really appreciate that the apostles handled it properly and recognizing that this was a concern that people had.

They stopped, and without question, we don't know the details of it, but they didn't kind of respond in the flesh and say, hey, be quiet. Just sit down and let me do this thing. No. Instead, and I want you to understand what they actually did, was they followed the model that had been set already in the Scriptures back, and you don't want to go back there for the time.

But in Exodus chapter 7, remember 17, remember when Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, arrived at camp and found Moses spending morning to night answering people's problems.

[12 : 54] And Jethro said, hey, bub, you're going to wear yourself out, and you're going to ruin these people. And he said, why don't you divide the responsibility and spread it out and choose godly men to help you? And so in this case, what we see is that the apostles followed that same model and applied the same truths.

Now, before we actually look at the characteristics for men that should serve, I want you to recognize there's some things that take place behind the scenes that are important for us to pay attention to.

Actually, I want you to recognize that godly leadership doesn't happen overnight like mushrooms after a warm rain. Godly leadership is developed over time. I want you to lock that into your mind.

Godly leadership is developed over time. As you look at Acts chapter 6, verse 3, it says, Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good reputation or reputation.

The apostles instructed the church to choose individuals that met certain qualifications. And with each of the qualifications, such as a good reputation, being full of the Holy Spirit, full of wisdom, I want you to recognize that those kind of things are not developed overnight.

[14:11] No one ever gains a reputation for good behavior in a single instance. Everybody can be reasonably courteous at the door when it comes time to open up and say, Oh, no, you go first.

But afterwards, we discover sometimes the heart that an individual has by some kind of snarky little common negative attitude or something that completely unhinges the blessing that seemed to be there.

I want you to turn just for a moment as we consider this matter of time over to 1 Timothy chapter 5, verse 22. 1 Timothy chapter 5, verse 22. 1 Timothy, written to Timothy by the apostle, is full in particular about practical details that are important in the body of Christ.

These are things to pay attention to. These are things that are going to help you. And these are blessings that are going to be invaluable to the fellowship that you are engaged in leading. And so we look here in verse 22, and it says, Do not be hasty in laying hands, but take time, nor take part in the sins of others.

Keep yourself pure. What he's saying in particular is that don't be quick to appoint individuals to positions of leadership. Why is that? If you look in the passage, it goes on and says this, verse 24.

[15:35] The sins of some men are conspicuous, going before them to judgment, but the sins of others appear later. I remember at one point in my youth being overly persuaded of my ability to discern character.

And I thought I was a pretty good read of character. As I've gotten older, I've learned that I'm a horrible read of character. And the only thing that really accommodates that horrible ability is that I rely upon time, time, time, time, time.

What am I saying? Pay attention over time you figure out what a person's really like. Give them time. Listen lots. Pay attention to how they respond when things don't go their way.

By the way, find out whether or not they're critical and sarcastic in their home. You can be a prince in the lobby, but you can be an absolute skunk. Moody, unhappy, surly.

How many of you understand those words? Do you follow what I'm saying? Okay. You can let it all hang out. By the way, we haven't done this, but it might not be a bad idea. Ask the wife, would you endorse your husband as an unqualified example of a godly man who handles his tongue well and his attitudes perfectly?

[16:52] Oh, okay. Preach. Stay with the text. So here we are. The Bible says it takes time, and we recognize that together.

Now, does that mean that in time, any and every man in this congregation is going to become a perfect example of Jesus all the time? What's the answer? I wish. I meant that.

I wish, but here's the truth. It's not going to happen. But what you want to see is two things. You want to see the incident rate between the mess-ups kind of become longer.

Do you follow that? How many of you understand what I mean by incident rates? I told you I got a speeding ticket, right? Well, what I am hoping is that the next ticket does not happen until I become room temperature.

What's he saying? Dead. Dead. And there's a practical reason for that. How many of you understand that if you have a recurring pattern of speeding tickets, there's something that happens to your insurance rate?

[18:01] So, as you get older, hopefully, the incident rate, fewer and fewer. Now, the other piece. When there is a mistake or a hiccup or a sin, what you hope is an indication of maturity is the narrowing of the gap between the incident and the recovery.

Do you follow that? Some of you have said some horrible things this last week at home. Some of you have just absolutely embarrassed Christ by your behavior at work.

Some of you have thought some despicable things in your heart, and even your wife doesn't know it. The test that I am curious about is how long did it take after that sin took place and you had a repentant and contrite heart?

You came back to your wife. If you said something to her and said, honey, you need to forgive me, that is so ungodly. And I am convicted that that's not the way that a believer should act, and I have

embarrassed myself before you, and I have harmed you.

You're the bride that God has given me. And all the women said, that's where an amen could slip in. Don't do it too loud. But, you know, it's like, yes.

[19:18] Okay? Or, you know, you have some problem at work, and you, hey, how many of you understand that? The incident rate of our failure, our sin, grows longer.

We don't have as many over a period of time. But when you do, quickly do you have a repentant and a contrite heart and plead with the Spirit of God to bring about a change.

So, anyway, I want you to understand that one of the things that characterizes godly leadership is it developed over time. Number two, godly leadership is characterized by ministry and servanthood.

I meant to say this, and I didn't, so I'll say it now. This Saturday, I understand we have two different families in our church that are going to be moving. Moving is a good thing, sometimes.

In this case, because they're family members of our fellowship, guess what we are going to be doing together doing that? We're going to show up, and we're going to help them. And do you know who's going to be there doing these things? I venture to say that you're going to see your deacons there.

[20:21] You may see a couple of pastors there. And here's the reason that takes place. It's because we understand that at the heart of spiritual leadership is servanthood. Servanthood.

I've had some individuals ask me, Pastor, how is it that Maranatha has maintained the level of peaceableness that we have for so long?

And we have, I never, you heard the phrase knock on wood? So you heard me do it. But I don't take the blessing that we have lightly. But I will tell you one of the things that has helped us with the spirit of unity and peaceableness that we have is because all who serve in our fellowship are well known for being servants of the bride.

And those who serve have less tendency of shooting their mouth off or having attitudes that make them a little bit like a porcupine or a skunk that you don't want to poke with a 10-foot stick.

Our leaders serve. And incidentally, when you look at the passage in Acts chapter 6, you understand that's what they were there to do.

[21:39] I love it when I hear a man say, Well, I'm kind of pondering being a deacon, but I'm just not sure if I want to sacrifice my Saturdays to help other people move or to help with meals or to pass out brochures through the neighborhood or whatever else we're doing.

When we put on a spring tea, it's all hands on deck. And nobody signed a contract saying, That's what you have to do. It's because they understand by the ministry of the Spirit of God and the prompting of the Spirit that service is part of what they do.

I think this issue of servanthood is pretty important. By the way, Jesus actually thought that too. If you think back over to Matthew chapter 20, just take a look at it quickly. I'm going to just touch on it. Matthew chapter 20, verse 25 through 28, you'll have two brothers whose mother came to Jesus and said, Hey, by the way, would you do me a big favor?

What's that? Well, when you come into your kingdom, I'd like my sons to be number one and number two. I mean, how would you like to be the mother who could advertise publicly, My son is not a doctor.

[22:50] My son is number one with Jesus. I mean, you know, heavy lifting if you really wanted to have it said that way. And here was the mother who was not asking just for a little minor. She wanted her sons, both of them, to be in position number one, position number two.

My son is the vice president and blah, blah, blah, whatever. Anyway, the disciples got an attitude about that. And Jesus said, Hey, stop. Let me tell you.

Those that are going to be first, those that are going to be most important are servants to all. And I can tell you because I look over this congregation and I can think in just the last month or so, the number of different times that I have seen our deacons quietly without fanfare show up and serve. We had one guy that looked like a pirate on last Thursday. Was it last Thursday? I mean, here's a deacon acting like a pirate. You know, we had other deacons showing up.

And by the way, why do they do that? They do it because they're examples to the body and they've been appointed to be servants. I want you to think about another passage, John chapter 13, verse 12 through 17.

[23:56] When Jesus, after he had ministered to his disciples there at the Last Supper, you know what he did? You know what he did? He put on a towel. He stooped down and he washed

everybody's feet.

Listen to me. Washing other people's feet is not a media event where once a year you go out and do it somewhere publicly and try to find a couple extra beggars to take care of that problem. Our deacons wash feet week in and week out. They pay attention to the needs of this fellowship. They know many times of the heartaches and needs that you have, and they are there on point to care for you, and they love you.

Well, I want you to understand third is that godly leadership is a matter of stewardship.

Stewardship. I want you to turn, if you will, to 1 Corinthians chapter 4.

Remember, we're dealing with background, and we understand that when the apostle said in Acts chapter 6, you need to pick these kind of guys out, they were actually speaking in broad terms about some essential characteristics that we need to remind ourselves of.

[25 : 06] Leaders happen over time, and they're developed by the Spirit of God in discipleship.

Leaders are servants, and leaders are stewards. There in 1 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 1, it says, This is how one should regard us as a servant of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

Moreover, it's required of stewards that they be found trustworthy. And I want you to understand that ultimately those who have been prepared by God's grace over time and who have been matured in the crucible of ministry and appointed to serve the body of Christ are men who recognize their position is a stewardship to the Lord of hosts.

They're responsible to Him. And why are they stewards? For one, because they have been obligated by their salvation and the blessing of God's grace. I remind you of what it says over in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, where it says this, The love of Christ constrains us.

Why does it put a bind on us? Or why does it tie us to a certain position or attitude? Because we know that Jesus died for us.

Truth of the matter is, several weeks ago, Tim Kenoyer, thinking about helping with a move. And I found myself in one of those attitudinal moments.

[26 : 28] How many of you understand what an attitudinal moment is? It's like I had other things to do. And by the way, I want you to know that my list is just like your list.

My leaves don't get cared for or my lawn taken care of or my honey-do list doesn't happen to just kind of shrink automatically just because I say, Oh, honey, I'm going to help. No, it's still there. And I remember a couple weeks ago, I was kind of mulling this over, and I thought, Hold it, Tim. Who are you going to serve? I'm going to serve Jesus. And when I got the right attitude, it actually ended up being a very enjoyable move.

And by the way, there are people watching us. I mean, it's like locusts come out of nowhere when we have a Maranatha move. It's like, whoosh, you know. And we're bumping into each other.

We're going, you know, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang. And there's kind of an unwritten rule, go fast, you know. I mean, we had all that. We had that truck unpacked in about 40 minutes, and the person who was watching us kind of had their jaw drop.

[27 : 30] And said, I wish I had your help to move, okay. I want you to understand that those who serve understand stewardship.

There's something else that I want you to understand in relationship to stewardship. Number one, it's not an accident. It's the grace of God that saves us. Number two, it's not an accident.

It's the work of God that helps us grow in grace. Agreed? By the way, if you're kind of sitting here on the periphery, and you're kind of one of those guys who's unhappy, ill-spirited, self-focused.

Can I tell you something? It's not fun being you. How do I know that? Because I've been there.

When the grace of God got a hold of my life and began a weapon on me to help me change, I began to find out that it was a whole lot more fun to be who Jesus wanted me to be than who I used to be.

I'm not all there yet. But I'll tell you what. I am obligated to the Lord Jesus who saved me and who has lifted me out of the pit and who has been working to help me change to be willing to serve the bride of Christ.

[28 : 59] Do you know what stewardship means? It means the day is coming when Tim Kenoyer is going to stand before the throne and the rest of you are going to stand before the throne and he is going to say, And what did you do with what I gave to you?

Well, I knew you were a hard guy and so I just kind of dug into the ground and hit it. No. Folks, I don't know what my future is, but by the grace of God, I want to keep on going up until I go out.

Well, having talked about the background, let's take a couple minutes and talk about the fact that it's a role with qualifications set by God. Now, there are three essential things that the apostles set out as standards for men that you call to serve as deacons.

Number one, a man with a good reputation. There in 1 Corinthians, go back to 1 Timothy. A man with a good reputation.

Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain.

[30 : 26] They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience and let them be tested first. And so we understand this, that the reminder that we have here in this passage is that when you appoint a man to serve as a deacon, he has to be a man who has a good reputation.

How many of you use something like, well, don't use Consumer Digest anymore, we Google it, right? And we want to find out whether the product we're going to buy has a certain level of reliability.

How many of you do that? Okay. And you pay attention. Do you know how those reliability grades are produced? In fact, over, it's like, hey, I won't go there.

It's by reputation and people posting things and saying, you know what? I have this kind of car and it's got the best service. I've been driving that thing for 350,000 miles. Haven't even had to change the oil.

And you go, that's what I want. Okay. You see, good reputation is something you earn over time. By the way, in case you're wondering, you do have to change oil.

[31 : 37] Some of you are going to go home and say, Pastor said that and send me an email. So I don't want that. Okay. Second thing is follow the Holy Spirit. Hey, this is not really tricky. This is not really tricky.

This passage in Acts chapter 6 was for everyone in the congregation that was going to choose. And being full of the Holy Spirit is not something where guys walk around with an aura around their head.

You know, like a little halo. It's like, oh, yeah, he's got it. How do you know somebody who's full of the Holy Spirit? Well, a couple things. Number one, we have Galatians passage that talks about the fruit of the Spirit, right?

Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, patience, goodness, temper, et cetera. Hey, let me tell you something that I've been continuing to work on, and I'm trusting God helps me make progress with it. Everybody pay attention.

1 Corinthians chapter 13 says, love thinks no evil. Everybody smile so you know I'm talking to you.

[32 : 49] One of the things that I am working at is that my first thought about other people is loving, not unloving. How many of you heard me?

Huh? First thought, not later. First thought. That's the Holy Spirit at work. There's another way in which you really figure out whether a person is filled with the Spirit.

It's this way. It's called the full cup. Whatever's inside, eventually, when you get bumped, comes what?

Outside. Now, most of us try. How many of you drink coffee when you drive? Raise your hand so I can kind of see who I'm talking to here. One of the things that I have done in the past before I got reasonably a little smarter is I used to spill coffee on my shirt.

You know, it's very embarrassing to come into the office and you've got all these dribbles down the front. It's like, what happened? But now I have a coffee cup that has a sippy to it.

[33 : 53] You know, it's like a, just get a little teeny weeny thing. It's like, you really draw on that thing. But the advantage is if you don't have all these stains on your shirt, right? Now, we all wish is that when it came to the issues that are inside, we were using sippy cups.

But here's the deal. When you get bumped, what's inside comes outside. And those who are full of the Holy Spirit, what comes out is going to be a blessing and encouragement.

How many of you are slowly learning that it's wiser to pray and plan ahead before you just shoot your mouth off?

The older I get, the older I get, the more carefully I work to guard my tongue and I can go left of center in a heartbeat.

Well, a man who is full of wisdom. Wisdom. And in essence, what I understand that to mean is not, you know, why is it that these absolutely dumb ads come to my mind?

[35 : 05] I'm thinking about that time that a guy climbs up that mountain and sees this, you know, kind of this, you know, holy man up there at the top.

And he says, I'm looking for wisdom. And he says, buy Michelin tires. You know, it's like, very off page. What does full of wisdom look like?

Everybody listen. Full of wisdom means that your heart exudes or brings out the word of God. Do you know God is infinitely wise?

We can all say amen to that. And so how do you know when a person is full of wisdom? When he is full of the scriptures. Earlier last week, I had a situation where an individual called me, not part of our fellowship, not even living around here, called me about a problem in a church, a younger pastor.

And as we were talking, working through a very, very traumatic situation, I remember as we were talking together, I said, listen, the first thing that you have to do is discipline yourself to think of passages of scripture that bear on this subject.

[36 : 29] Because when you are involved with people's hearts, one of the things I can't guarantee is how it will come out in the short term.

Let me explain. When you go to a brother and say, you know what? That was a really unkind thing you did. And you do that with the 2 Timothy 2, verse 24.

It says that the servant of the Lord must not strive but be gentle in meekness, instructing those who oppose him. You know what meekness looks like? Huh? It doesn't look like Mr. Smackdown dealing with a problem.

And I told him, I said, you can't guarantee how the other person is going to react, but here's what you can do. You can be certain that if you are following the scriptures, that you will have the smile of the only one who counts when you get home.

Amen. And so a man who's full of wisdom is a man who has the word at hand. I look at our deacons this morning, and I can tell you that on more than one occasion, we've stopped.

[37 : 39] And by the way, one of the biggest jokes in our church, at least in the deacon board, is that pastor always gets his way. Tim Smith, do you remember that? Tim Smith, relatively new deacon.

And when he walked in there, he kind of thought that urban legend, that might be possibly true, that pastor got his way. How many times do I get my way, Tim? Not very often. Ah, I wish.

But the truth of the matter is, is most of my ideas are dumb. Our deacons spare you incredible heartache.

And they do so with a reasonable kindness. It's like, pastor, really? Okay. Many times we'll stop, and I'll say, we need to pray.

And then afterwards I say, and let's kind of share some scriptures that come to mind. And different guys around the table will bring out, well, I'm thinking about this one, or I'm thinking about this one. And we began to kind of reframe the challenge that we're having with the word of God.

[38 : 47] One more thing. Being a deacon is a role appointed by God's people. You look there at Acts chapter 6, and we see there that the apostles set the standards, and it was the people that did the choosing.

There's a reason that we're going to have our people vote on our deacons.

Those who serve the body are reasonably called by the body. We see in this text that the people made their choice through the guidelines provided by the Holy Spirit, communicated by the apostles.

And that after he had chosen these individuals, then the apostles took care of arranging the details and seeing how it worked out. And so I want you to understand that the reason that I come to open up the word of God and preach to you about the subject of godly leadership in advance is with this understanding that you, informed by the scriptures and prayerfully considering what the Bible has to say, are going to pray and ask for God's leading as you look to those who will be leaders in this congregation.

So let's summarize with just a couple practical applications. Number one, men, all men, should desire to grow to be fit to serve.

[40 : 18] I can't say that every man should grow to be a pastor. Now, the reason for that is I believe that men are called and appointed by God to be preachers of the word of God.

And so I can't say to every man here, you know, I would love to see you grow. Now, in practical terms, I would like to see men grow to be pastors, but I know many are not called to do that. But I can also say this, that the scriptures make it clear that the qualifications for men who are suited to lead are the standards that any reasonable wife would hope her husband would aspire to. How many of you just heard what I said? How many of you would like to have husbands who were qualified to serve as deacons? Raise your hands and wave at me. Okay.

So, men, yes, it is my ambition. It is my desire. It is what the Spirit of God prompts me to, that I should have a desire to grow to be suited to serve.

[41 : 36] Secondly, godly men should have been prepared by his grace. Godly men that have been prepared by his grace should be willing to serve. If God has been working in your life over years to suit you for service, listen to me carefully.

It's a serious thing to say no when he's invested a lot of energy in you. Would you agree with that? Huh? Now, Tim Kenoyer is not the arbiter of your conscience.

I want to be clear on that. But I can tell you this. I know where I started. God, I know that.

An unregenerate fool who was delivered by the grace of God from his incredible arrogance and slowly over time beat senseless repeatedly to help me grow marginally reasonable and to help me grow to be a servant of the bride of Christ.

And when the day comes that I retire from preaching from here publicly, I will continue serving the bride because he called me to do it. I don't have the right of saying, well, I'm done serving those people.

[42 : 57] Do you understand that? I don't have the right. He having poured his heart into my life to say no to him. Third, God's people should prayerfully choose godly people, godly men.

Scratch the people. This is gender specific in case you're wondering. Prayerfully choose godly men. Well, today is a wonderful, wonderful day where we have the opportunity of hearing the testimony of people who know Christ, have come by faith, and want to be baptized.

So I'm going to ask that the candidates come at this time. John, we're going to pray. You can come up. The band can come up. I'm not going to be thrown off. You guys close your eyes, though. Let's pray. Holy Father, we are thankful that you have given to us the word that we can rely upon, a clear compass in a confusing day.

We're thankful that the scriptures make clear what godly leadership is and call us to depend upon your spirit and make wise decisions. We thank you for how you have blessed this fellowship over the years with the exemplary leadership of men who have been willing to sacrifice their personal comforts and time to, with humility and tenderness, serve the bride of Christ.

We pray for those who are here today that do not know Christ as they hear the sweetness of the wisdom that you have in helping the body, that they would say, Man, a God that is wise like that and that has shown me love in the Lord Jesus Christ is one that I must bow to and confess my sins, that Christ would be honored.

[44 : 50] We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.