

# The Walk and Witness of an Overseer

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Preacher: Rev Donald M Macleod

[ 0 : 00 ] Again, we're here to worship God. Let's sing to his praise from a Scottish Psalter. A Scottish Psalter, and we can sing verses from Psalm 95 on page 357.

Scottish Psalter, Psalm 95 on page 357. Psalm 95 on page 357. We can sing verses 1 down to verse 7 of this glorious psalm of praise.

Psalm 95. Come, let us sing to the Lord. Come, let us everyone. A joyful noise make to the rock of our salvation. Let us before his presence come with praise and thankful voice.

Let us sing psalms to him with grace and make a joyful noise. Psalm 95 verses 1 to 7 to God's praise. O come, let us sing to the Lord.

Come, let us everyone. Let us sing to the Lord.

[ 1 : 40 ] Come, let us sing to the Lord.

For God's name, let us sing to the Lord.

The strength of the Lord. The strength of His presence. For Him, let us sing to the Lord. For Him, let us sing to the Lord.

The strength of the Lord. the spirit of the Lord. My lips and sing yet incremental But thy will also fair Its hand, yet from the firm's O come, come, let us worship Him.

Let us, our God, with all, And all our days before the Lord, And we lift our land as whole.

[ 4 : 04 ] For He is the God that paid the ring, Of He so those sto begr■, And all this night worship Him.

To be inspired by the Father of me, let's join together in prayer let's pray Lord we again come before you this evening again understanding we come before your holy presence help us we ask to be in a right frame of mind just now to come before you just now understanding that we are as it were standing on holy ground not because of any merit of this building or any merit of ourselves but we stand as it were on holy ground we stand before you our holy God because as your word tells us because there are your people here this evening worshipping you you have made your home in us you have tabernacled and you dwell in us and because we are here this evening worshipping your holy name we do so understanding that your presence is here help us not to lose sight of that reality that we come before a holy God a God who as we heard in the morning who sees and who knows all that we think and all that we are and all that we do but more than that you are the God who has seen us from the start but even more than that you are the God who knows even our end that all the days of our life all the words that we will speak all the thoughts we will have that all these things are known to you that is not one single second of our lives nor one atom of our being nor the universe we exist in which is somehow beyond your perfect complete and sovereign control you are the God we come to this evening understanding that you alone are the true living God that you alone not only created this universe but you sustain this universe you alone sustain the distant galaxies and planets you alone sustain the parts of this universe we will never see nor understand the parts of this universe we will never begin to comprehend but all these things and all these parts are well known to you as we think of the majesty and the extent of your power as we think to the extent of your reign in this place your reign over creation we come and we humble ourselves and we confess that even at this moment we feel our own created nature we feel and acknowledge the fact that we are creatures made from the dust in our ways and in our thoughts and our actions that we show day by day that we are from the earth but we are eternally different to you for we have no real grasp or understanding of who you are we'll give you praise that despite your majesty that in face of all your glory and your unending wonderful reality that you have made yourself known to us that you have made yourself knowable to man that in your love for your created creatures that you revealed yourself you revealed yourself in part you revealed yourself in his ways in means that we can begin to understand and ultimately we give you praise in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour we saw the reality of our beloved high priest good shepherd elder brother and friend who was fully God and fully man in his coming in his life in his perfect obedience in his death his resurrection and his continuing now at your right hand that we have one who has made known to us in his bodily form the full reality of deity

yes there's much mystery for us there and mystery beyond mystery for us we give you praise that this evening what has been revealed to us is understandable to us and in Jesus we have one who was made like us in all ways apart from sin who lived a very real life who died that death who understands what it is to be like one of his own creatures to feel what we feel to experience what we experience to go through as aware of it the highs and the lows and the pain of life to cry to laugh to weep and to mourn that we have that great and glorious high priest a great and glorious saviour who is a fellow sufferer and who knows what it is to come alongside those who suffer for he himself endured he himself endured all that it is to be human but more than we ever will endure he endured it all without sin without once giving in to temptation to live that perfect life

Lord it's to that perfect life and in that perfect life we find our hope this evening as we come just now remembering the one at your right hand our great glorious saviour who at this very moment is interceding for us at this very moment is making that intercession who at this very moment is lifting up the names and experiences and situations of his own beloved people to you who takes our prayers and who perfects our prayers and who makes what is glorious out of that which is less than glorious help us this evening as brothers and sisters to understand that we come here together as one family with that saviour over us we come here this evening as one family seeking the one same shared goal to see his name glorified in our own lives to see his name glorified in this village as we prayed in the morning we pray again once more we would see a day where your name is known in this place where your name is known in this district where your gospel is understood and heard where the Lord

Jesus Christ is held in high regard as Lord as saviour as friend it's to that end we ask it's to that end we pray it's to that end that we seek diligently to serve you well in this place with that service in mind we do pray especially this evening for our office bearers we pray just now for the elders we thank you for them we ask you bless them individually in their own lives we ask you bless them in their own walk with you as they seek to serve you day by day we pray for them as it were privately in their own home lives we pray for them as they spend time with family and friends we pray for them as they live their life in this village and in places of work and as they spend their time day by day we ask you be with them and encourage them we pray for them in all their duties as elders we pray also for them in their duties as deacons as they take up that double role in this congregation currently serving you in both aspects with concern to the spiritual and the practical and the physical worries and material reality of this congregation we pray for them in all their duties that you'd uplift them and be with them you'd give them insight and give them wisdom

[ 12 : 14 ] Lord you'd encourage them in their calling to serve you in this way we know that for all who are called to serve you in specific ways the calling is too big and our ability is too small we give you praise for that reality we pray you would increase that sense in us that as we see the calling to be too big and ourselves to be too small it's there in that chasm in between both these realities we find you we find you reminding us that yes we are not able at all and yes our ability is too small and yes the task is too big and because these two things are true that you reign and you rule and you're able to take small ability and use it for your glory and you're able to take the massive task of this community as a whole and the fervence of the gospel in this place and to show your power in bringing many to come to know you Lord help that to be our goal not just for the elders but for all of us who know and who love you help us to have hearts and minds set on the reality that we long and we do long

Lord to see renewal and revival in these villages in this village and in these homes those who are our neighbours and our friends our family those who we have just now that we're in no contact with whatsoever we long to see them come to know you give us opportunity we ask to share the great and glorious gospel news give us wisdom we ask in that sharing give us the words to say give us the right tone and the right sense of how we should speak we pray once more Lord for the boys and the girls we thank you for them for those who are present in Sunday school week after week we thank you for the good number of Sunday school that we see and that we have just now we ask you to truly bless them Lord as we try and share some stories with them and as in Sunday school as they hear lessons and are given lessons and as they interact with your word we thank you Lord for those who work hard week by week to lead the Sunday school we ask truly truly they would know a blessing for their service and even though the work is often demanding even though the work is often hard even though they may worry of what the children are truly taking in we give you praise for minister and for

Christian people with the various things which may well divide us at times we pray for ourselves as one Christian group in this place to do your will well to seek to serve you well all for your name's sake and for your glory Lord we pray just now for those over us locally and nationally as we come to what looks to be perhaps a chaotic or at least confusing or at least troubled a few weeks ahead of us in terms of our own nations a political situation we Lord ask that you would be involved fully there we ask that you would lead and guide and whoever may be elected as our new first minister we do ask that you would lead and guide them we do pray for our own government locally in the council nationally in hollywood and in westminster Lord that you would raise up ones who would serve you well we do pray just now for those who are yours in position of government and position of power be with them and encourage them as they seek to serve you in situations which are so difficult and which require so much wisdom and so much tact give them guidance we leave that

[18:02] God from all eternity Psalm 93 the whole psalm to God's praise Lord is voted high is shining as light than He had am and are the true in majesty and the aqua said the day the world is found is there and should bring you make a hand of me your

For the Lord's name, Thank the thunder of the orchard's praise, And thank the hall, the  
orchard's praise, For the Lord's name, In the royal satches' dark sand, And changing his  
good words. And holiness and glory still has,

Let's now turn to read in God's word. We have two readings this evening. Our first reading is a short reading. Just a few verses from 1 Peter chapter 5.

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Let's hear the word of God. So I exhort the elders among you, As a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, As well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed, Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, Exercising oversight, Not under compulsion, But willingly, As God would have you, Not for shameful gain, But eagerly, Not domineering over those in your charge, But being examples to the flock.

And when the chief shepherd appears, You will receive the unfading crown of glory. Likewise, you who are younger, Be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, With humility toward one another.

For God opposes the proud, But gives grace to the humble. And then turning this time to 1 Timothy, 1 Timothy chapter 3.

[ 23 : 44 ] 1 Timothy chapter 3, that's on page 932. 1 Timothy chapter 3, on page 932.

1 Timothy chapter 3, on page 932. 1 Timothy chapter 3, on page 932. 1 Timothy chapter 3, sorry. 1 Timothy chapter 3, on page 932.

Let's again hear the word of God. The saying is trustworthy. If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, He desires a noble task. Therefore, an overseer must be above reproach.

The husband of one wife, Sober-minded, self-controlled, Respectable, hospitable, Able to teach, Not a drunkard, Not violent, but gentle, Not quarrelsome, 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?

[ 24 : 52 ] 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, So that he may not fall into disgrace, Into a snare of the devil.

Deacons, likewise, must be dignified, Not double-tongued, Not addicted to much wine, Not greedy for dishonest gain. They must hold the mystery of the faith, With a clear conscience.

And let them also be tested first, And then let them serve as deacons, If they prove themselves blameless. Their wives, likewise, must be dignified, Not slanderers, but sober-minded, Faithful in all things.

Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, Managing their children and their own households well. For those who serve well as deacons, Gain a good standing for themselves, And also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

I hope to come to you soon, But I am writing these things to you, So that if I delay, You may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, Which is the church of the living God, A pillar and buttress of the truth.

[ 26 : 08 ] Great indeed, we confess, Is the mystery of godliness. He was manifested in the flesh, Vindicated by the Spirit, Seen by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.

Amen. We give praise to God for His holy, And His perfect word. Again singing in God's praise, And again from sing psalms, And Psalm 1, And Psalm 1, Sing psalms in Psalm 1, Psalm 1a, Sing psalms in Psalm 1a, Blesses the one who turns away, From where the wicked walk, Who does not stand in sinners paths, Or sit with those who mock, Instead he finds God's holy law, His joy and great delight, He makes the precepts of the Lord, His study, day and night.

Psalm 1a, Whole psalm to God's praise. Psalm 1a, Blesses the one who turns away, From where the wicked one, Is the one who turns away, He does not stand in sinners paths, Or sit with those who mock, Since then He finds God's holy law, And His joy and great delight,

He makes the peace. He makes the peace. Of the Lord, Is the one who turns away, He makes the peace.

The one who turns away, He makes the peace. He makes the peace. The Holy Spirit.

[ 28 : 57 ] The Number One the yes yes yes yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah■■■-

And leave the life of the Lord with the Lord evermore.

Let's try a short time to turn back to the chapter we had in 1 Timothy 3. 1 Timothy 3. We're taking in both readings.

For the sake of a text, 1 Timothy 3 and the first verse. Chapter 3 and verse 1. The saying is trustworthy.

If anyone aspires to the office of an overseer, he desires a noble task. We finished, of course, last time our study in Jonah.

[ 31 : 15 ] And for the next few weeks, with the Lord's help, could be two weeks, could be three weeks, we'll see how we get on this evening and next week. We have a very short study, and it will be a short study, in exactly what this chapter is talking about.

What does it look like? What does it mean for someone to be an elder, a minister? And later on we'll see also perhaps a deacon.

Now often, as it makes sense and as is right, we only address these chapters perhaps when we have the plan of making new elders and making new deacons.

And that's not why we're doing this this evening or the next few weeks. But really, Scripture again and again, it's in the background. But we do see the reality that the letters of the New Testament, that many of these letters are pastoral letters.

They're written with a purpose. 1 and 2 Timothy. Written to, of course, Timothy, a young minister who is trying his hardest in a context, in a situation where life is hard, where ministry is hard.

[ 32 : 23 ] And we'll see again and again and again these letters being addressed, or at least sections of the letters being addressed to those who are trying to help look after the churches.

So for our time tonight, and with the Lord's help over the next few weeks, we're going to spend just a short time looking what it is to be, we see here, an overseer.

Before we start here, the word overseer, it's the same word that we would use, the Greek word, it's related to words we have for presbyter, the same word also used for bishop.

It's the same word used as one who is in charge, one who is to lead a congregation, or involved in the leading. As we'll see more later on, it's a more accurate perhaps translation, one who is involved in the leading.

Humanly speaking, very important, humanly speaking, the leading of a congregation. Now, the next few weeks are not meant to be a checklist for us. It's not a checklist for us to say, to compare the elders and myself from congregation.

[ 33 : 37 ] Please give us some grace, I hope you will. This is speaking to the very top reality of what a deacon or an elder or a minister should be like and should look like.

This is what we are striving to be like. This is what we hope to be like. But we'll see this later on and as weeks go on, we are very much aware, very much aware that we will fall and indeed do fall short of so many of these realities and many of these qualifications for our calling.

The plan is to look in two very broad sections over the next few weeks, looking at the job of the overseer, the preacher.

So looking first of all at the preacher in his person and the preacher in his work. What is a minister supposed to be like? And what does a minister do?

I was reading last night just a few bits and pieces just to see what else has been said about this. And to my horror, and it makes sense, one of the commentators, just a wee passing comment at the end, advises against all new ministers from preaching on these texts.

[ 34 : 55 ] And he wasn't joking. And his answer, his reasoning is obvious, isn't it? But the worry is, as you preach these verses, you're giving your congregation, in theory, you're giving your congregation, as he worded it, ammunition to use against you.

Now, that says a lot, I think, about his own situation rather than what is right. But as we look through these verses and look what it is to be a minister, the reality is, this is not just the congregation.

This is for me, it's for the elders. As we remind ourselves what it is we are striving to be. What it is we're striving to do. What our calling is and what our duties are.

As we do that, for all of us together as one church family to be reminded of how it all works. How the Lord has designed it to work. And when the Lord designs it to work, it works so very, very well when all the parts work together.

So first of all, for a short time this evening, looking at the person of the overseer, the person of the minister. Again, taking our text from chapter 3 and looking briefly at points also in our reading in Peter.

[ 36 : 08 ] Looking at the conduct of the minister and the personality of the minister. So the conduct and the personality.

First of all, conduct. What does or what should a minister act like? What should his conduct be?

Again, this is not just preaching to myself or for myself. This is across the board, across the denominations. What does a minister of the Lord act like?

According to these qualifications. There's a few qualifications here. First of all, people. People. By this we mean he is not self-serving.

A minister of the gospel is not self-serving. He is, with respect, to be a team player.

[ 37 : 09 ] As we said, we are, of course, Presbyterians. This is a Presbyterian denomination. And that is not for nothing. All the elders and myself, we, if you remember, a month and a bit ago, even through my own oaths here, I affirmed that I believed in the Presbyterian church government to be the correct and biblical form of church government.

And the church government we hold to, and the church government we say that we can see and find in Scripture, and indeed we do find in Scripture, and that's perhaps a sermon for another time, it is Presbyterian.

There is no, as it were, bishop. There is no one over us, in terms of humanly speaking. There is no one person over any part of the system.

And we'll see that as we go on. The minister is to be a team player, we could say, with respect. He is to be one who is part of the wider team, the wider church.

There is no one ruler of any of our church courts. So I have to ask you just now, honestly to ask you, who is humanly in charge of the congregation, in charge of a congregation?

[ 38 : 29 ] Being honest, I think even myself automatically, I'd always have caught myself thinking of the minister, obviously. It's his job. It's getting paid to do.

He's getting paid, and he's been called to be in charge of the congregation. The answer sounds right, sounds good, but it's not biblical. It's not the process we see.

It's also not the reality. Who's in charge, humanly speaking? And that's a caveat. I always keep saying, humanly speaking, we're talking about God, the God-given role and process of his overseers.

Who is, humanly speaking, in charge of the spiritual good of his congregation? It's not me or my own. It's all the elders you elected.

Myself as one of them. The elders. As we look at these sections, these verses, we're reminded that when Paul and Peter, when they write, they write in the plural.

[ 39 : 31 ] They write in the plural. Our reading in Peter, we saw that as here again in Timothy. Yes, Paul often addresses Timothy, but even when he addresses Timothy, he always writes in the plural when he talks about the church leadership.

Because no one person, no one person is ever in charge of the Lord's people. The Lord has given presbyters. He's given elders.

He's given overseers. For ourselves here, it's the elders, and myself as one of the elders. Our brothers in America, brothers and sisters in America, they, some of the Reformed churches, Presbyterian churches, some Baptist churches too, that's a different situation, but they quite helpfully use two different terms that we don't use.

They have teaching elders and leading elders. Well, it changed their names, but say leading and teaching. The teaching elder is, of course, the minister, the pastor, and the leading elder is, well, the rest of the session.

The core connection being, of course, that they're all elders. When it comes to the Kirk session, when it comes to the elders of this congregation, I have no greater spiritual control than the rest of my brothers do.

[ 40 : 52 ] That is right. That is biblical. Now, it falls on the minister, and it is right also in biblical, but the minister is perhaps to lead in terms of vision, and to put forward plans and ideas, and to see the direction we go as a congregation, and all that, that's a given.

But ultimately, if I suggest something that brothers can say, no, that sounds like an awful idea, and vice versa, that sounds like a good idea.

The minister must be a team player. We are one of a group of elders. The Lord has given charge locally of his church to a group, elected, chosen from the congregation themselves, by yourselves, to look after the spiritual matters of this congregation.

Again, 1 Peter, we read 1 Peter 5, the first verse, Peter says, and Peter addresses, as a fellow elder. The apostle Peter, the things he had seen, the things he had done, the glorious grandeur of his name.

You can imagine how famous, how well known he was in the church of the day, and yet, he is simply a fellow elder. I'm the same as the rest of you.

[ 42 : 09 ] An apostle, yes. Spoken and spoken to by the Lord Jesus Christ, yes. Seen and done miraculous things, yes.

But ultimately, I am just a fellow elder. The minister, the overseer, must be a team player. People, he is one of the fellow brothers who have been set aside by the congregation to help lead spiritually the people.

The minister is also called to be peaceful. He is called to be peaceful. Not quarrelsome. Verse 3, not quarrelsome.

Just to help us, this is sometimes confused. Verse 3, the minister is not to be quarrelsome. It's not saying that the minister is to be a pushover. That he's just to go along with whatever's said or done.

No. It doesn't mean the minister is to be weak. It doesn't mean the minister is not willing to defend the gospel cause, however it might be attacked locally or nationally.



[ 43 : 25 ] It's not saying that. What it is saying is quite simple though. It does mean the minister, the overseer, is not to be hot-headed. Not to be hot-headed with his fellow elders.

Not to be hot-headed with his congregation as he seeks to lead and to guide and to shepherd. Not to be hot-headed also with the wider community.

Not to be a cause of contention locally. And we'll see that more later on. There's a very thin line, isn't there, between standing your ground and being quarrelsome.

There's the overseer's task and the overseer's calling to strive to make that line clear. What causes someone to overstep that line?

What causes an overseer, a minister, to become quarrelsome, to become argumentative? What's the biggest cause? I'm willing to say it's probably pride, isn't it?

[ 44 : 31 ] It's almost certainly, almost always pride. I am right. I am very right. And I will show you just how right I am.

And in that rightness, in that showing of your rightness, you have just jettisoned completely the gospel cause and the gospel peace and gospel unity.

the minister, the overseer, is not to be quarrelsome. He's not to be known for being argumentative, for being difficult.

The minister is also, and we're saying here, planned. It's a loose term. The term we're taking in to take in the three qualifiers here in verse two, to be planned in his actions.

Sober-minded, self-controlled, and respectable. Sober-minded, self-controlled, and respectable, in verse two. Planned, but by planned I mean just clear, and calm, and reasonable, in all that he says, and all that he does.

[ 45 : 42 ] The overseer is to be self-controlled. self-controlled. There's no sense, there's no worry of chaos, or of outbursts, or of anger.

We take these three qualifiers as one. Someone who is sober-minded, is also self-controlled, is also respectable, in all they do. Self-controlled, they're clear thinking, they're purpose-driven, and the purpose is the glory of Christ, and his cause to be advanced in the congregation, and in the wider community.

That is the job, the goal, the desire, seeking to work well in the task that's been given to them. And here, sober-minded, it's to be clear-minded.

Drunkenness is covered later on, but that's not what's being said here. Sober-minded, in a sense, to be clear-minded, to not be distracted by whatever else might arise in your life or in the world around you.

As an overseer, you've been called for a very specific job, a very specific purpose, and your desire and your mind and your goals need to be focused towards that purpose.

[ 47 : 00 ] Often, at the sacrifice of your own personal desires, your own personal goals, your own personal even wants and needs and plans. There's limits and there's caveats, but speaking generally, that is often the case.

To be sober-minded, to be clear-minded, to be respectable, to be self-controlled. not flying off the handle. The minister of the overseer should be able to be someone that you feel able to approach and share with them you've just made a mess of things.

To come to them, to knock on the man's door, to phone the man's, and to say, do you know what, I've really messed things up. I've done X and Y and Z, I've said this, I've said that, and it's all gone to pot.

And to say that and not worry that the overseer, the minister, the elder is going to take your head off. Calm, sober-minded, respectable, self-controlled.

In that, as one of the commentators notes, and as, although it's not how we think of him, as Calvin himself would often, in his letters, in his own private letters, would comment on that a minister should not be without humour.

[ 48 : 21 ] Now, Calvin wasn't saying, as you can imagine, he wasn't saying to be joking from the pulpit, but by that, Calvin and the fellow reformed brothers who went before us, and sisters, they understood that there is joy in this world, and there has to be a sense of joy at times.

For all the seriousness of the task, a put-on serious face doesn't make someone serious. An attempt to look morose and look like a minister, it's not real.

It's a lie at times, to be honest. We're called to a serious task and to do that job seriously. We must also be relatable, we must be naderach, we must be people.

God has called us individually to serve the way he's called us to serve, in that we bring our personalities, we bring who we are, we bring what we are. I'm very careful not to speak personally in these sermons because it's not talking about myself or ourselves, but just I have to say in passing, I am very thankful that I have been able to be myself with you all here and it's a great blessing to me and I know it's a blessing that many ministers, many young ministers don't have in their first congregations.

They have to feel like they act and be a certain way. And that comes to the congregation being open and being happy to take the minister as he comes. Self-controlled, respectable, calm, sober-minded, able to be approached and talked with and discussed things with.

[ 49 : 57 ] That takes us to a much more precise situation we've called parent. Parent, complained to parent.

A parent doesn't really do the job but it covers what we're trying to say. Manage his household well. Verse 4 and verse 5. He must manage his household well with all dignity keeping his children submissive for if someone does not know how to manage the own household how will they care for God's church.

In short, what an overseer looks to do and to be in church he must first look and be and do at home.

The private man should look and reflect the public man and vice versa. If in public he is kind and gentle and loving to his people and sober-minded and self-controlled but at home behind the scenes he is the opposite.

He is a horrible person to be around. He is controlling and he is X, Y, Z. Then he is failing horrendously in his job as an overseer.

[ 51 : 22 ] He must manage his household well and the word manage is not a very precise word. He must manage his household well. That word implies an active involvement quite literally.

He must be actively involved in his household. He must be a fully involved husband and father if the case may be. If he has a family he must be involved in that family.

His ministry is first to his family then to his wider congregation. Active involvement is implied in the very wording of this command.

He must be actively involved in his own household. He must actively manage his household well with all dignity. Of course ultimately what children do cannot always be the responsibility of parents.

We know about ourselves. There comes a point where we become our own people and we do our own things. and despite our parents best efforts and best teaching and love and everything else we know ourselves that kids will grow up and do their own thing whether that's good or not so good.

[ 52 : 43 ] Whether that's wise or not so wise. And we must be careful here. If we're seeing that if someone's being elder does that mean their kids must just be perfect?

Is that realistic? Well no of course it's not. Of course it's not. But the sense here and we'll see again the Lord's help next time. The sense here is if you can say honestly you've done your job in your household to love and look after and keep your family to the best of your ability even when something's gone wrong and the kids do their own thing and perhaps are less than great.

When their behaviour is perhaps less than fab if you can say honestly you have tried your hardest and you strive to reflect a godly leading a sober minded gentle kind so on so on style of parenting if you've looked after your children to the best of your biblical understanding then you've done your job as best you can.

Done your job as best you can. Ultimately the overseer must be the same in private as he is in public. And the reality is we all know that is not always the case.

The sad reality is that is not the case. There are many who enjoy the public facing reality of what it is to be an overseer. The fame perhaps, the glory perhaps, the accolades, the congregation hanging on your every word in theory.

[ 54 : 20 ] and they look good, they sound good, behind closed doors, they are a whole different creature. If that's the case, they are not qualified in the slightest to be an overseer.

And finally, in the conduct of an overseer, it's public. It's public. The last verse, quite an unusual verse.

It's a verse perhaps you wouldn't expect to see if I were to write to this list. Verse 7, Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace and to a snare of the devil.

He must be well thought of by outsiders. We're not saying for a second that an overseer, a minister, needs to be agreeing to the outside world.

That's not what the text says, but thought well of. And that reality takes in what we said earlier, to be self-controlled, not to be hot-headed, to be agreeable, to be kind, and we'll see this next week, to be gentle, to be caring, all the other qualifiers we have, to be gentle, not to be a lover of money, not to be a drunkard, not to be quarrelsome.

[ 55 : 49 ] All of these things matter if the outside world sees the overseer, sees the minister. If the outside world is going to hate the minister, or despise the job of the overseer, let it be for the truth that we preach, and not for the person that we are.

If the world hates us because of who we are, in Christ, fine, fine, we know that comes with a calling, that is what we expect to happen.

If the world does not like us because of who we are personally, then verse seven kicks in, and verse seven tells us that somehow our personality, our actions, our words, something we're doing or saying is causing those outside the church to not think well of us.

if that's down to us and not down to the gospel, then we are going wrong somewhere. Going wrong somewhere.

It's not the minister's job to be aloof. It's not the minister's job to sit in his high tower and to look down on the outside world. That's not the calling we see in these verses.

[ 57 : 08 ] It's not the calling we see anywhere in Scripture. And we know personally, we know ourselves in our own history, not talking of course here, but talking widely in the island and in Scotland over the years, aloof ministers and cold ministers and distant ministers and ministers who took offence personally as a good thing rather than offence for gospel's sake.

It destroys gospel witness in that place. It ruins the gospel witness for years and the times for many years. church. As the world looks in on us as ministers and as elders and wider as a congregation, the world should not want to be part of us because of our gospel, because of our message, that is fine.

That's what Scripture tells us. But if you look on us and say, I won't join that church, go near that church because of the minister, because of its elders, because of X, Y, and Z, because of so-and-so, because they're hot-headed, because they're quarrelsome, because they're argumentative, because they're unpleasant, because they're drunkards, because they're violent, and so on, and so on, and so on.

That's another problem. And that's where we begin to fall short of our calling here in these verses. I'll be honest, I'm seeing time has gone completely on me.

The plan was this evening to cover the personality also of the minister, but rather than squeeze it into a few minutes, probably best to bring this to a conclusion and carry on for Lord's help.

[ 58 : 39 ] Next week we see the personality of a minister. That's the conduct of a minister. That's the conduct of what a minister, an overseer, is supposed to be like. He's supposed to be a people's person in terms of his own people, a team player.

He's supposed to be peaceful in terms of being part of his congregation, peaceful, not quarrelsome, not wanting or looking for an argument. He's to be planned in that he's to be self-controlled, respectable, sober-minded.

He is to parent or to husband, that's not a real word, but he's to parent well. He's to, to the best of his own abilities, look after and keep a happy household in a godly way.

And he's to be a public person, a public outside of the congregation, should look on him and despise him for his message, despise him perhaps for the gospel itself, never despise him for his personality or for his conduct.

As we begin to look at these qualifiers, I won't speak for my brothers of the elders, but the reality is when you read these verses, they're challenging. They're so very challenging.

[ 60 : 00 ] The reality is we do, I do, we all do fall short of these qualifiers. But time and time again, we see a lack of one or the other in our lives.

We see where we fall short are not serving the Lord well in this area or in that area. And the reality is if we bring this to a wider conduct, the conduct of all of us as believers this evening, all our conduct for all of us are to point those around us towards Jesus.

And we this evening are noticing that our conduct is not matching up to what we have here, even as personally as Christians, not just as those of us who are elders or positions of leadership, but for all of us as Christians.

Because many of these qualifiers we find elsewhere in Scripture that apply to Christians as a whole. We're all called to be sober-minded. We're all called to be gentle.

We're all called, not to be drunkards. We're all called to do all these tasks. The overseers are called to do them or strive to do them to a higher level, yes.

[ 61 : 08 ] But we're all called to live a life that point those around us to our glorious Saviour. Our glorious Saviour. Please do pray for your overseers.

Pray for us, those of us who have desired this noble task. Because the burden is real. The burden is genuine. But also is the joy. The joy is also real.

The joy of serving is also genuine. And as we look at these verses and we find ourselves falling short, we as overseers, but also ourselves as a whole congregation, we have to be reminded of one thing to conclude.

Reminded of one thing. for all our service, for all the effort and the time and the joy of serving the Lord, it's to him we serve.

It's for his sake we serve. The greatest of ministers, humanly speaking, the most well-known, the most respected, the most godly of ministers, is an under-shepherd at most, an under-shepherd at most, that you and I with you, we all serve together the great high shepherd who's over me, who's over you, who's over us all together as brothers and sisters.

[ 62 : 31 ] It's to him we look, it's to him we have our ultimate hope. And just a word to any who as of yet don't know Jesus, I know it's very centred on the teaching here for Christians here this evening, but the reality is, being honest, a lot of damage has been done over the years, hasn't it, by those who are overseers, who have acted in ways completely, completely inappropriate to their calling and to the duties we saw even these few verses this evening.

So the message to you is, do not simply look to the men who stand here. Don't look to us. say this every week but I say it again.

For all my striving perhaps to follow this, for all my previous minister striving to follow these things, for all the ministers who have stood here and who will stand here, we cannot save you.

Our strivings cannot save you. Our plans for ministry in this area will not save you. you must come to the Lord don't look to man don't look to the minister don't look to anyone else to stand between you and the Lord at the end of the day it is you alone who will answer to the Lord you've heard the gospel you've been given the gospel by many overseers perhaps over many years when it comes down to it you alone are answerable for why as of yet you've not responded to the simple gospel you've heard so many times this is your chance once more this evening as you hear as to the great burden what it is to be an overseer ultimately it's a burden that is that's completely taken over by the joy we have of knowing Jesus of serving Jesus where's your joy this evening?

as you struggle in life as you try and live a life that is good that is helpful and so on where's your hope? where's your joy? who do you serve this evening?

[ 64 : 39 ] our hope is that you come and serve the great shepherd who cares for the souls of all his peoples and who cares for their souls perfectly let's bow our heads now a word of prayer Lord we come just now we pray once more thanking you for the the clarity of your word and the clear guidance of it we pray just now Lord again for Lord the elders we pray for ourselves as we seek to serve you well in this place Lord renew us and revive us and if need be perhaps convict us as we come to look at these verses again as we come to remind ourselves and remind the whole congregation what it is to serve you in this role Lord we ask that it is your will that perhaps even tonight you would stir in the heart of some here perhaps as they think of serving you in some ways Lord you alone know that reality help us to serve you well in the week to come help us as a congregation as a whole to seek to serve you well in this place knowing we've been set in this place each one of us have been set in this place to serve you in our homes in this village help us to be willing to be as it were living sacrifices for the sake of the gospel as your apostle told and wrote that he has been poured out near enough daily for the sake of the gospel

Lord help us to have the same desire to give of ourselves to see your name glorified and the gospel known and spread even in this place help us as we come to sing our final item of praise to do so of hearts and minds full of understanding and full of praise for you the God who cares for his people who keeps his people and who promises to never let his people go it's got all these things in and through and for Christ precious name's sake Amen we conclude with that great psalm of unity for Psalm 133 Scottish Psalter Psalm 133 Scottish Psalter Psalm 133 we praise the Lord there are many who sing this psalm in a congregation that's not united so we praise the Lord genuinely praise the Lord for his goodness to give us a united congregation Psalm 133 behold how good a thing it is and how becoming well together such as brethren are in unity to dwell like precious ointment on the head that down the beard did flow even Aaron's beard and to the skirt did off his garments go

Psalm 133 the whole psalm to God's praise Jesus chant From the golden bar.

That all the earth, the God that gave it home, He may not give them to the scourge, That all the sky is full.

Our families should die true love, For the sky of heaven's peace, For earth the best in your somas, Thy love shall never end.

[ 69 : 15 ] In the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, And the love of God the Father, And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, For of you now and forevermore. Amen.