

The Personality of an Overseer

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- [0 : 0 0] Good evening and welcome again to our service of worship. We're here to worship our living and eternal God. Let's carry on that public worship by singing to his praise from Scottish Psalter in Psalm 95.
- Scottish Psalter in Psalm 95, that's on page 357 of the Psalm Books. Scottish Psalter, Psalm 95 on page 357.
- We'll sing verses 1 down to verse 5 of the Psalm. O 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 5 to God's praise.
- O come, let us sing to the Lord, come let us everyone a joyful noise.
- [1 : 1 6] They do the wrong of our salvation. Let us sing to the Lord, come let us sing to the Lord, come let us sing to the Lord.
- Let us sing to the Lord, come let us sing to the Lord. Let us sing to the Lord, come let us sing to the Lord.
- And make our joyful lives For God and make God and make Him At the heart of God's tears And so fear how He will Watside The stem shall fit with his Warum To Him the creation of■■■■ Good morning, Petal.
- join together in a word of prayer. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for once again throwing us together this evening.
- We give you praise that despite the various many reasons we're here, if we're here because we're willing here to worship you, if we're here because of a weekly pattern, if we're here, Lord, to perhaps keep a spouse happy, if we're here, Lord, for the sake of tradition, if we're here for various many reasons, we give you praise that we find ourselves gathered this evening to worship you.
- [3 : 5 3] We find ourselves gathered this evening as a family together, singing your praises. We thank you we can gather here just now, knowing we gather in the presence and in the company of brothers and sisters.
- We do pray, Lord, that for our fellowship here, for our gathering here, as weeks go in and weeks go, Lord, as months come and as months go, as the years come and the years go, we ask who'd feel one another more and more like brother and sister.
- We grow together as one family, seeking, Lord, to work for you, Lord, in that sense of unity in this place, seeking to work with one goal, to see your name glorified and your name praised in this community.
- We do pray especially this evening for our community here. We pray for every home that is represented here this evening. We pray for every home where your people live up and down across this district.
- We pray the same for our brothers and sisters next door and the homes they represent, your people next door that seek to serve you in spirit and in truth. We thank you that you have your people in this village, that there is gospel light in this place.

[5 : 07] We do pray again, especially this evening, for ourselves as a congregation. We ask as we seek a way forward, serving you well, you would give us wisdom on how we should do so.

Help us in our conduct as your people in this place to glorify your name and to bring a positive witness to who you are. Help us in all that we say and all that we do in this community.

Help us in our daily conduct of our neighbours and our friends and those who we meet day by day in this place. Help us to show them, to show our friends and our families and our neighbours, to show them what it is to be yours, that we are them who know a living Saviour, who have been raised, as it were, from that spiritual death from and by that risen Saviour, who have that eternal hope that one day we will join with our risen Saviour in glory.

Help us to live lives that show that dependence, lives that show that hope that we have, that eternal hope. We pray once more for the many, even in this district, who do not pray for themselves, who have no thought for their souls, who have no care, Lord, for their eternal destiny.

We ask this night this evening especially for them. We ask that you would work in their lives. We ask that it is your will that you would use us as your people to be salt and light to them.

[6 : 30] We do pray for our own individual witnesses. We pray for our own individual witnesses in our homes and our families. We bring just now especially those who are family members, who as of yet have no saving interest in you.

We pray for parents and for children. We pray for brothers and sisters. We pray for close family members, those who we love so much, we care for so deeply, those who we long to worship with side by side, but who as of yet have no saving interest.

We ask that even this evening you begin to work in their hearts. We pray for any here this evening who enjoy perhaps being here, who are here to hear more about Jesus, what it is to know him and to love him and to serve him, but who as of yet cannot say that they are yours, who as of yet cannot say that Jesus is their saviour.

We thank you for them this evening. We thank you that they are here with us. We thank you that they are under the word. We ask that even through your word this evening you begin to open up their eyes and to show them that there is a great shepherd to his sheep, the Lord Jesus Christ, who cares for his people, who cares for us eternally, who is not absent in our lives, but who is in every way, at every step, at every point of our lives, is with us.

He has gone before us. He is behind us. He is carrying us along this life. The good and glorious High Shepherd who at this moment is reigning and ruling at your right hand.

[8 : 03] Our gracious and glorious Good Shepherd who intercesses, who prays on our behalf at all times. Our Good Shepherd who is our High Priest. The Good Shepherd who still bears in his body the marks of his love for us.

The Good Shepherd who promises to one day come and take his precious sheep, his precious children, his precious people back to be home with him. We do pray, Lord, on that day that when he comes to take his people home, we would find ourselves numbered with our friends here this evening, our as of yet unbelieving friends.

Lord, you'd work in hearts here this very evening, work in minds, work in souls. I give you praise that we're not here this evening because of weekly patterns. We're not here because of the request of loved ones.

We're here this evening because in eternity past, you decided and you planned we would be here. But before time and reality itself existed, that you had planned that on this day and on this evening, we'd find ourselves here worshipping you.

Once more, we do pray especially for ourselves as a congregation. Lord, we pray, Lord, for the people here this evening who know you and who love you. Lord, help us to grow in your word.

[9 : 23] Help us to grow in our understanding, but help us also to grow in our love. As we grow, perhaps, in our theological understanding, help us also to grow in our droxology, in our worship of you, in our praise of who you are.

Help us never just to grow for the sake of growing, but help us always seek to grow so we can worship you more and worship you perhaps better so we can cry out to your name and we can show our love to you that bit more.

Help us never to learn about your goodness and your mercy and your covenantal love towards us just for the sake of it, but help all our learning be turned to worship, all our learning being turned to love back to you.

We pray once more for our dear brother and the family, Lord, who mourn this evening. We ask, Lord, you be with them especially and be close to them, Lord, that you would comfort them.

We pray, Lord, for the wider family and we also pray, Lord, for the wider circle of friends who are so deeply impacted by the loss of a dear sister, a dear sister in the Lord, one who evidently had such an incredible impact in her many years of serving you and of worshipping you.

[10 : 36] We ask, Lord, for that mourning family that you would be with them once more and comfort them and draw close to them. Help us as a community here to show our love towards that family in spiritual ways and perhaps in physical ways also.

We pray, Lord, for your people here this evening who are hurting, those here this evening who are perhaps facing situations and circumstances which are difficult and painful.

Lord, perhaps only you and they know about it. Circumstances and providences to do with health, physical and mental, to do with perhaps family or financial situations.

Lord, you alone know. We ask you to draw alongside them, comfort them in their worry. You reassure them of your care for them and of your love towards them, but also reassure them that you're the God who has seen the beginning from the end and the end from the beginning, that nothing is unknown to you, but all things are open and plain to you, that all things are known to you.

You're the God who has created even our very futures, but there's nothing about we step out into this week, there is no situation we will face this week, there is no hard or dark or trying providence we will face this week that is not known to you.

[11 : 55] All things are known to you. But we worship a sovereign God, a sovereign God who loves his people, a sovereign God who is good to his people, who shows your love to us day by day, your covenantal, ongoing, never-ending love towards those you have called your own from before time itself.

Help us to serve you well in this place. We would see, Lord, we would see and we ask for days of refreshing and days of renewal, days of revival. As always, not asking it for our glory, not asking it for the glory of this congregation, not asking it for the glory of our denomination.

We ask also days of renewal and days of revival for our brothers and sisters next door. We would see this community alive once more with gospel love and gospel knowledge. We would see this village alive once more, this area alive once more with your people house to house singing your praises and knowing your name and worshipping you.

We know we pray for such a great thing and this day of small things. We give you praise that we perhaps find the gospel, at least to us, appearing so small today, the gospel cause appearing so small.

We give you praise that you are working your gospel, glorious gospel power across the world in places, Lord, where the gospel was once unknown. We now see churches expanding and our churches now sending missionaries over to this country.

[13 : 22] Lord, we thank you for that, that reminder that you are not a God of Scotland. You are not a God, Lord, of the West, but you are a God of all your people across the world. We pray just now especially for our dear brothers and sisters in the Middle East.

Lord, you know the countries and you know the situations and you know the circumstances. We pray for them, those who are suffering persecution just now, those who are going through hardships just now.

We pray for them. We also pray, Lord, for the brothers and sisters who seek to help our dear persecuted brothers and sisters. We pray for them just now, those who are in prison, those who are suffering in prison just now, those who are ill in prison just now, those who are in prison for daring to share the good news that Jesus is King, that He rules, that He reigns and in Him there is hope for all who come to Him.

Brothers and sisters who are awaiting news of loved ones, brothers and sisters who have lost livelihoods and homes, brothers and sisters who have attacked physically, who are attacked continually mentally for their witness of You.

Lord, we pray for them. We will never meet them this side of eternity but You know them and they're Yours. We pray, Lord, for the Gospels that goes out in these countries as we see and hear of many come to know You and come to love You.

[14 : 37] Many thousands in some places, Lord. We thank You for that good and glorious news. Help us to be encouraged. Your work is not ending. Your work never stops. The Gospels going out.

And Your people are being gathered in day by day. Until the work ends, Lord, until these days stop, help us to serve You well in our own place. In this day of small things, perhaps for us, help us to be faithful witnesses.

Help us to be salt and to be light in this dark and bland generation. Help us to show the love that's been shown to us. Lord, forgive us our sins. We come this evening once more asking for forgiveness of sin.

We confess we've sinned against You even this day. Even since we're gathering this afternoon, we have sinned against You in our actions and our thoughts and in our words. Help us, Lord.

Help us to understand that when we sin, we sin against a holy God. A holy God that You're perfect in Your holiness, perfect in Your beauty and Your wonder. We come before You, Lord, and we ask forgiveness for these sins.

[15 : 40] We come before You and we ask You that You would remind us just of what it is we have done, Lord, as we sin against You. We also ask just now for Your people here this evening as we find ourselves perhaps tempted or to keep us from temptation.

Keep us always of our Saviour in front of us with His finished work and His beauty and His wonder. Lord, we ask You that You would fight against us, fight with us for the enemies often against us.

You would fight Him, Lord, and You would keep Him far from us. We give You praise that for all temptations we face, all the pain and worry we face, that we worship You, the God who is eternal.

Even the enemy rages against us that He also has His end as we heard a few days ago. But until that day comes, help us to serve You well, to serve You faithfully.

Let's go all these things in and through and for Christ's precious name's sake. Amen. Let's turn to read in God's Word. 1 Timothy.

[16 : 41] 1 Timothy and chapter 3. That's on page 932 of the church psalm books. 1 Timothy chapter 3 on page 932.

It feels like an eternity ago but we'll be looking later on and carrying on our wee series on what it means to be an overseer. We're reading first God's Word. 1 Timothy chapter 3 page 932.

Let's hear again 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?

[17 : 53] He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up of 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 and to 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.

For wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, magnifying their children and their households well, managing their children and their 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 ideally, 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, 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.

[19 : 29] We give praise to God again for his holy and his perfect word. Lord, let's sing this time from Sing Psalms. Sing Psalms in Psalm 15.

Sing Psalms in Psalm 15. That's on page 16 of the Psalm books. Sing Psalms in Psalm 15 on page 16. Lord, who may stay within your tent, your sacred dwelling place, and who upon your holy hill may live before your face, whoever walks a blameless path, who acts in righteousness, and who will always from the heart sincerely truth express.

Sing the whole Psalm to God's praise. Psalm 15.

Psalm 15.

Psalm 15.

[21 : 45] Psalm 15. Psalm 15.

Psalm 15. Psalm 15. Psalm 15. Psalm 15. Psalm 15. Psalm 15. Psalm 15.

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Psalm 15. Psalm 15. Psalm 15. Psalm 15. Psalm 15.

Psalm 15. Psalm 15. Let's for a very short time turn back to the chapter we had. 1 Timothy chapter 3.

- [23 : 10] 1 Timothy chapter 3. As we said, it feels like a lifetime ago, but we did start a very short series on looking at what is a minister, what is an elder, what is an overseer.
- And we covered last time, we're focusing really on the first section here, of course, verses 1 down to verse 7. We're also looking, taking sections from 1 Peter chapter 5, the first five verses.
- We're mixing and matching a bit. We're focusing on 1 Timothy to keep things a bit easier for us. But 1 Timothy and also 1 Peter chapter 5. We saw last time the person of an overseer, the person of a minister, the person of an elder, and we looked at their conduct.
- What should their conduct look like? We touched just very briefly at the end of our last time together at the personality of a minister, the personality of an overseer.
- And that is what we're going to focus on for a short time tonight. What does or what should an overseer's personality look like?
- [24 : 19] What should it be like? Just to remind or refresh ourselves, when we say overseer, it is the same word used here for minister and for elders, and rightfully so.
- As we said last time, what's the difference between myself and the elders? None. In the eyes of the Lord, we could say in the church, there is no difference.
- Different roles, of course. Different functions, of course. We're all elders together. Again, calling on our American brothers and sisters, they have teaching elders and preaching elders, or leading elders often used.
- Leading elders, sorry. Leading elders and teaching elders. Quite simply. Leading elders would be the elders, and the teaching elder is often the minister. But elders alike. The Bible uses the term overseer to cover all bases.
- We are overseers. We're here to look after the congregation. Here to serve the congregation. Again, to get back to basics, the very word minister. Who am I called to minister to?
- [25 : 30] The old term minister, to serve. To help. Who have you asked me to minister? Who have you asked me to look after, to serve? I'm here to serve, of course, the Lord, but in doing that, I'm here to serve the congregation.
- I'm here to serve you, to be your minister. And perhaps in time, we've taken that as being minister. But in reality, we'll see later on, if a minister's called to serve like his servant, like my servant, like my king, the Lord Jesus Christ, then I am called to be a servant leader.
- Servant minister. And ministers and overseers serve best when we ourselves seek to serve our people. And we'll see that more later on.
- So three very broad areas, just very broad from our verses here, of how an overseer's personality should be like. Now, we've said this before. Please don't use this as a tick list.
- I assure you, if you do, you will find, I don't want to speak on my brother's behalf here, but speak for myself, anything else, you will find plenty of gaps. Plenty of gaps.
- [26 : 42] If I'm saying this evening that a minister should be this, this, and this, and I assure you that in the study of this sermon, the gaps have been well noted by myself. And even last time, we did the study, speaking to the brothers afterwards.
- Don't for a second think that we aren't applying these verses to ourselves and seeing our own shortcomings. But to encourage us as a congregation together, what does, or what should a minister's personality be like?
- Well, three main points. The overseer is called to be gentle, to be giving, and to be genuine. So gentle, giving, and genuine.

First of all, gentle. When you think of what the world wants in a leader, in the political world, in the business, commerce world, financial world, what does a good leader look like?

Smart? Savvy, perhaps? But more often than not, someone, with all the charisma, all the chat, all the brains, someone who can get the job done, whatever it takes.

[27 : 56] Someone brash, someone bold. Not so for the church. One of the qualifications we see here, for the overseer, for the overseer, for an elder, a minister, must be gentle.

Must be gentle. Now we'll see in a second, that gentle doesn't mean a pushover. It doesn't mean you let the whole world attack you, you know. But you must be gentle. Power, and charisma, and big plans, and all of this worldly thinking.

It's a time that it finds its place into the church. And we know ourselves, there's times when a church gives over its leadership to men who've got all the charisma, and men who have all the chat, and all the right things to say, but who are not gentle, who aren't caring towards their people.

And for as well as they might preach and teach, as well as they might lead, look to be leading well, when it comes down to it, they are not gentle people, not caring people.

The church often finds it out far too late, the church's own good. We see here that the scriptural imperative is that we must be gentle.

[29 : 20] Well, yes, a minister perhaps must be gentle, but surely a minister, an overseer, is called to defend the gospel, to fight the encroaching secular world as we find it attacking us day by day.

Well, yes, we'll see that more in a second, but again, the message here is to be gentle. We don't find anything else qualifying it, do we?

We see quite simply here, in our section, in our verses here, the overseer is to be gentle.

At the end of verse 3, not violent, but gentle, not quarrelsome, gentle, not argumentative, not violent, not brash, not hard to get to know, not hard to speak to, not someone to be terrified of, but gentle.

Leaders are called to be a gentle people. And if we're honest, we should look back, and I hope we do look back, and look around perhaps at times, and look to ourselves at times with shame, with real gospel-based shame, you think how ungentle we've been in the past.

[30 : 41] How ungentle at times we are just now. As situations come and go, as people come and go, and we see the Lord's people being dealt with and talked to so ungently, so harshly, so brashly, so painfully by those who've been called to be gentle.

And we all know what's going on here. We all know what I'm saying, really. We all know the reality, what it takes, that when people, when the Lord's people are dealt with harshly by those called to be leaders, it does real lasting damage.

We all know that. See, these commands for leaders, they aren't just suggestions. These are the God-given realities of how a minister, how an elder must live, or must seek at least, to live their lives, our lives.

And the truth is, when we don't live our lives as the scripture commands us to do so, we will not just ruin our own reputation, not just make our own lives as elders harder, but because we're called to serve a congregation, the congregation also suffers when ministers and elders don't seek to do their jobs properly.

When you have a minister, for example, who is harsh, who cannot be approached, who perhaps might view himself as somehow above the people he's been called to serve, a minister who gives solid answers, perhaps, but gives answers which are just so grating and which are so solid in an unhealthy way, which are just so, just so down the line for any kind of emotion whatsoever.

[32 : 23] Sounds good, perhaps. It feels good, perhaps. It sounds all holy, as we said last week. But bit by bit, that congregation will begin to lose any hope of actually coming towards their minister and being open, being honest towards their minister.

If every problem they have is met with a harsh answer or a blunt answer, congregation begins to stop talking to their minister and perhaps rightfully so. We're called to be gentle.

But as we said, gentle does not mean weak. Gentle does not mean weak. Again, as ministers, as elders, we're called to protect the flock of God.

We're called to protect, as we took, because I took my oaths a few months ago. I promised and I vowed that I would protect the gospel cause in this place amongst the people here.

These are vows we take seriously. We just sang just now in Psalm 15. We take our vows seriously, our vows we make before God himself. And because we're gentle, it does not mean we're weak.

[33 : 32] If there's some problems arising, some heresy coming in, we must be ready and willing to deal with that. If there's issues arising, perhaps from some, even the congregation, which require some harsh working, it must be done.

If there's gospel, other types of gospels coming in and trying to interpose in our true gospel, that must be dealt with by the elders, by the overseers. Gentle does not mean weak.

But it does mean that as we even deal with these complicated, hard-going situations, we still do so gently. Gently does not mean weak.

But dealing with things harshly and dealing with things bluntly is never permissible. Dealing with things with an unkind spirit is never found in Scripture.

We must be gentle and not quarrelsome. Let's not be violent in our ways. If you've ever found yourself being scared of an overseer, being scared of an elder or a minister, and if we're being very honest, I am willing to say that most of us at some point have been.

[35 : 00] If that person has caused us to fear because of something they've acted or something they've said or a way they've been, then they've not stuck to quite simply what we've been commanded to be. This is not a command for today's soft, modern Christians, for this new minister here before you who's hardly qualified, who knows nothing.

This is a command that was given to Timothy by the Apostle Paul. Our forefathers and our forefathers before them were called to be gentle. The generation before me of ministers was called to be gentle.

The generation before that was called to be gentle. And we have failed and failed perhaps at times quite drastically in showing the gentle reality. We must lead people carefully.

Our own culture today, our own community, with all the new lambs coming out. If you see a crofter with his stick battering a brand new lamb because he's going the wrong way or being just vicious towards one of the sheep, you think, man, what kind of person is he?

What a man is he? Well, so the same for a pastor, an overseer. If you see a minister or an elder dealing harshly or speaking harshly to someone who does not deserve it at all, what kind of overseer, what kind of elder, what kind of minister is he failing to do the most basic of what he's been called to do as an overseer?

[36 : 25] Why are we called to be gentle? Quite simply, we're called to be gentle because we worship and seek to serve our great shepherd who is called what?

Who calls himself what? Gentle and lowly. Gentle and lowly. The great son of God, the second person of the Trinity, who has reigned from all eternity to all eternity.

Who has all power and glory of God. Who commands the armies of angels. Who the whole creation bows down to him. Who owns it all. Who runs it all.

All things are his. All things made through him, made for him. The king of kings. He is the one who calls himself gentle and lowly.

And if we seek to serve after him, to be his under-shepherds as elders and ministers, we are called to live a life of service as he did. We're called to be gentle and lowly as he was gentle and lowly.

[37 : 36] And this is how we see our saviour dealing with every interaction. We saw this morning when Jesus comes face to face with even the most horrendous people. People who deserve not even the time of day from him.

He deals with them lovingly and carefully. At the same time, at the same time we saw this morning, when he comes face to face with those who seek to disrupt and destroy the gospel.

When he comes face to face with the Pharisees for example, and those who seek to say that God is not saying what God is truly saying. Jesus is still gentle and lowly, but he deals with them quite precisely.

Here's what we're saying. Gentle doesn't mean weak. Calvin, you wonder sometimes, we perhaps think of Calvin as being so heavy handed, such a harsh man, such a dark and dour man.

Calvin's congregation loved him for his congregations. They loved him. Why do they love him? Because he was dark and dour and serious. No. Calvin's congregation loved him because he loved his people.

[38 : 44] If you ever get a chance, there's a few copies in the manse. Feel free to borrow them. Honestly, please do. I've got one copy, a modern copy of Calvin's letters. Calvin wrote hundreds upon hundreds of letters to his friends, his family, his congregation members because he was a shepherd who gently cared for his people.

Calvin said that a shepherd must have two voices. A shepherd must have two voices. One to gather the sheep in and one to keep the wolves away.

And often we perhaps confuse these two voices. In one sense, it would be easier for myself, for example, to come each week and to lambast the congregation, to shout at you all about the law and how failing you are in it and myself with you.

But that's not beneficial. No one grows then. At times it's easier to ignore the heresies creeping in. It's easier to ignore where things are going wrong.

That's not helpful. We must have two voices and Calvin is right. Gentle and caring as we seek to help the congregation and to support you in your faith.

[40 : 00] Then being willing at all times to use the other voice, that harsh, blunt voice against the wolves, against the heresies and false teachings which are encroaching at all the time.

All the time behind the scenes that Satan is seeking to do his work in this place and we know that. We said that before. As an overseer, as a minister, I am called to be gentle to the people who have called me here.

I am called to love you and to serve you. This is not to make myself sound good and I hope you don't think that. It is not. We're basing it on our text here. The same was said to the man who stood here before me and whoever may welcome after me.

The same gospel standards are set for him. They are called, every person who stands here as a minister, we are called to be gentle, to be loving towards you as our people.

And often that is hard because it means sacrifice. It means being gentle towards people who perhaps otherwise wouldn't normally deserve it.

[41 : 08] To be gentle towards people who are not gentle towards us as elders. People who perhaps have no time for us, have no care for us. We're still called to take that harshness perhaps on board and to be gentle and kind in return.

Gentle. and lowly like our Saviour. We're called to be gentle. We're also called to be giving. Called to be giving.

Quite often, we see it a few times throughout Timothy and also Peter also. We're called to be giving. First of all, we're called to be giving in our time.

Giving, as I were, in our life. The life of the overseer is one of sacrifice. It's one of sacrifice. Willing and joyful sacrifice, of course, but sacrifice nonetheless.

the reality is, and it's a good reality, the second you accept a call to a congregation or the second you become an elder of the congregation, you're elected as an elder, you become the elder of that congregation, of the minister of that congregation, at all times, in all places.

[42 : 31] We take holidays, we take time off perhaps, but you're always still the minister, you're always still the elder. The duty you take on as an overseer, there is no time off for it.

There's no stopping it. Even in the most literal sense, during holiday, your phone is off, your emails on dinner replies, some of the minister has taken over from you, but your mind is still always doing the work behind the scenes of an overseer.

You're planning, you're thinking, you're planning, you're thinking, you're working things out. That is what we're called to be. We're called to have a life we give of ourselves for the sake of our people.

Why? To follow our great shepherd who gave of himself for the sake of his people. If not physically working, then always at least mentally working.

It's often beautiful and often as we see in the scriptures and the scriptural principles for all the giving and sacrifice we have, the pastor really has two ministries. The overseer, the minister, two ministries.

[43 : 38] Ministers with families. Our family must be our first ministry. Our family must be our first ministry. They're the ones who are closest to us, who see us and who know us and who know us and who see us day to day.

As genuine as I seek to be with you all, truth is, you see me for a few hours a week. But my family, they see me as I am day to day.

So they are my first ministry. Right behind that as I almost close second place is the congregation. Family first ministry, congregation is my second ministry.

And after that, then we have the rest of the whole community. So a sacrifice, an overseer must be willing to give of our time to serve our community, our family, our congregation, our community as best as we can.

I was thinking I was speaking to one colleague in this presbytery and he was just as an offhand conversation talking about something completely different. And he shared that this colleague took a £30,000 pay cut, in essence, to become a minister.

[44 : 57] I have no idea the sacrifice of my fellow colleagues in ministry. As a congregation, we don't know what other Christians are going through, what they give up to serve. This one colleague took a £30,000 cut.

Himself and his family took a £30,000 cut to come and serve a minister. Willingly. Because the call was there to serve the Lord's people and he was called to give off his time and for him to give, quite literally, off his money too.

We see that here, money is a real factor. The one who is called to be an overseer must not be a lover of money. At the end of verse 3, not a lover of money.

There are, of course, some very rich Christians, there are some very rich overseers around this world, some very rich ministers around this world, who have earned their money in various ways that are not sinful and that is their own private lives and there is no command for that.

The having of money, perhaps, is not sinful. It's not. But the love of money certainly is. Whether that's a small amount or a large amount. The overseer who loves his money, who loves his material world, he's already in dangerous, dangerous ground.

[46 : 15] We all know there's great sin and great failure attached to those who love the material more than spiritual. Who love their money and their lifestyle more than their congregation.

Plenty of evidence around the world and our own country and our own context of men who loved what they had more than he loved for people. It leads to disaster after disaster after disaster.

We're called to manage. We're called to manage our household well. We must be financially smart, of course, but our love must be to the congregation first, to our job first, to our people first and never a lover of money.

We're called to give for time, but also called to give financially. 1 Peter 5, verse 2, says that the overseer must not serve for shameful gain.

The context is for shameful financial gain, shameful personal gain. When it comes to the question of why do we serve as overseers, if the answer is ever something close to for the paycheck, for the fame, for the wonder, for the adoration, we must stop, give up our jobs and go to something else.

[47 : 44] For a minister to serve, an overseer to serve, our hearts and our minds must be first in our congregation, willing to give our time, chunks of our life, chunks of our heart and our soul and quite literally at times to give away our financial security if needs be for the sake of our people.

We're called to give, not to serve for shameful gain, but to serve for God's glory, to serve for God's people to be uplifted and upbuilt in their faith and in their service.

Called to serve to see God's people grow week by week and month by month. Called to give of ourselves literally, mentally, physically, financially, to see the congregation prosper and the upbuilding of the gospel.

We must be gentle, we must be willing to be giving, to give of ourselves and finally, we must quite simply seek to be genuine.

Start with chapter 3 in verse 1. The saying is trustworthy. If anyone aspires to the office of an overseer, he desires a noble task.

[49 : 07] It's a noble job, a noble task to be an overseer. Don't get it confused. Being an overseer does not make you noble.

Being an overseer does not make you noble, but the desire to be one is a noble undertaking. But it's one that also, of course, is truly a task.

He desires a noble task. Noble wording there. Again, no word in Scripture is wasted. It's not he desires a noble position. He desires a noble job. He desires a noble title.

No. He desires a noble task. A duty. Quite literally a hard-worked duty. Although, again, we are guilty of this, we've made the position of the minister and elder perhaps into something that's seen to be glorious and something high up there.

It's a wonderful job. It's a glorious job. It's a beautiful job. I wouldn't ever do anything different. But if we're in it for the fame and the glory and the splendour and the pomp and to be seen as being noble, then we've already given up our jobs.

[50 : 20] We've already completely destroyed the very purpose we've been called to do. No. We've been called to be genuine. Not doing it for our title. Not doing it to be seen or to be heard. We're doing it to serve the Lord and to serve the Lord's people at the same time.

Called to be genuine. It's a noble task. Not something we undertake lightly. Never something we do lightly. The next time we have perhaps ordination of deacons or of elders, even if you have a blue book at home that's also on the Free Church website, have a look if you want.

I can provide them to you if you really want. The questions for ordination of elders or the questions for ordination of a minister. We have to read these questions properly and see what the questions are asking you to undertake and to agree to and to think about and to set your life towards.

They are big tasks. Even on your own sheet when you sign the call to myself or reading it again they ever do. The call is to the care of the souls of the people of North Tulsa.

The care of the souls of the congregation of North Tulsa. We're not here for the pomp, are we? We're not here for the ceremony. We're not here to be up here and look good up here.

[51 : 39] We're here to serve you. To seek to be genuine. To help you grow in your love and knowledge of the Lord and to grow together as a family. Also must not be a recent convert.

Some level of Christian experience is needed for an overseer to be an overseer. Now, interestingly enough, it's not talking really about age here. Although there is some obvious standards for that in a free church you have to be 21 and above.

21 and above in a free church to hold any office in the church. But not a recent convert. That implies more your age in terms of your faith. Not to be a young Christian, young in your faith Christian.

There are some young people who are young in age who have been Christians for many years. There are some older people who are very young in their faith still.

To be an overseer, you must be someone who has lived a Christian life for some time. For some time. A mature Christian, a Christian seeking to grow.

[52 : 50] Why? What's the danger? Verse 6. He must not be a recent convert or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil.

For all we're saying just now about us not wanting to pump in ceremony, the truth is, whether on purpose or not, there is so much chance and so many opportunities to be so full of yourself as an overseer.

Let's be honest. So full of yourself. And this verse is alluding to this. The Bible is honest. When you're up here week after week, when you're in the village known for being the minister of the elders, there are so many opportunities the devil gives us to be proud of ourselves, to be so full of ourselves.

And the warning here is don't even begin to think that way. That's the thinking of an immature, brand new Christian.

But you're called to be a mature Christian seeking to serve the Lord and to find no deceit and no dishonesty and not to be puffed up in who you are as a person but to focus on who the Lord has called you to be.

[54 : 01] 1 Peter in that section of 1 Peter. It tells us that the overseer is not to be domineering. Not to be domineering but to serve the flock of God joyfully, willingly, peaceably.

We're called to be genuine, not to be domineering. How do we lead as overseers or how we call to lead as overseers? Gently, carefully, lovingly, clearly, not willing to bow down to either the culture standards, the society standards, the day we live in, false Christianity standards, all that aside, we're called to live genuine lives, careful lives, gentle lives, not to be domineering.

just as we said before, there is temptation to enjoy the praise, the adoration of being a minister, being an overseer. There's also the temptation to rule with an iron fist, to rule with power, to make the congregation bow down to you as you seek to lead them the way you want to lead them.

It happens. We know it happens. It's happened in our own history. It's happened in our own culture. It's happened in our own island. It's happened across our world and it happens this very day. Ministers who lead, who lead by power and by fear.

1 Peter calls the overseer to not be domineering. We're called to be genuine. As we seek to serve the Lord as best we can, we then show ourselves as a witness to the congregation, to encourage the congregation to serve the Lord as best you can and together as elders, deacons, minister and brothers and sisters all together, we serve the Lord with one spirit, with one intent, with one heart, with one plan.

[56 : 06] That is our joy. That is our hope. That is our purpose here. So what is your overseers or what should your overseers be like?

Here's a challenge that will make us all very uncomfortable. I said this before but I'll say it in a different context. If you find your overseers, myself included, failing in these areas, if you see us failing in these areas, would you as a congregation perhaps not be willing but would you be able do you think to bring it up to us?

Would you? Genuinely, honestly. If you see that I am, I'll use myself as an example rather than dropping my brothers in it. If you saw me becoming less than gentle over time, would you be willing to say to the elders, if not me, but say to the elders, Donald's going a bit harsh these days.

He's saying things and he's very abrasive these days. Well if not, together we should be able to. We're here to serve together, to love together, to grow together.

We're not above the congregation. We're here to encourage the congregation. We're here to lead the congregation but to do so as servant leaders as our Saviour has done before us. I'm very much aware all this last half hour was directed towards those here who are believers.

[57 : 31] There are friends here who as of yet you aren't saved. The one thing I want to say instead of this last time I'll say it again. Don't not come to Jesus.

Don't have an excuse for not coming to Jesus but his people have failed you. Because do you know what we have? And we will. For all the training I have for all the years of experience our brothers here have for all the good intentions we have to be genuine and to be gentle and to be giving we will fail.

We will fail because we are human. We are still prone to sin and waywardness and our own desires. I will mess it up. We definitely will. We strive not to but we will.

Who this evening do we have our hope based on as overseers? Our Lord Jesus Christ. Who do you or who should you have your hope based on this evening? The Lord Jesus Christ.

We might falter at times and fail at times in our leadership. When you follow Jesus he will never fail to lead you well. He will never fail to be the perfect good shepherd who leads his sheep with constant love constant care constant gentleness in a constantly genuine noble giving eternally giving way.

[58 : 52] if as part of your reason that you've not yet come to faith if as part of your reason that you've not yet come to have Jesus as your Lord as you say to yourself well look how badly I've been treated by his people over the years.

Perhaps you have. Perhaps you have. But that at the end of the day is no excuse for coming to Jesus because he will not treat you wrongly. He will not treat you badly.

He will treat his sheep his people with love and care and gentleness. For all the effort we have as overseers to lead you well we all as brothers and sisters put ourselves under his care who leads us perfectly.

Let's bow our heads in that. A quick word of prayer. Lord we ask you to bless these few short thoughts from your word to us this evening. Help us we ask as overseers in this congregation to serve you well in this place Lord to love you well in this place.

Help us in all we say and think and do to glorify you. Lord give us wisdom we ask as overseers to serve you well in this congregation.

[60 : 02] Lord we ask you forgive us for any of the times we have not served you well. For the times we have gone astray from serving you as we know we should be. Lord bless our congregation and bless our family gathering here.

Help us of one spirit and one heart to grow up together as one family and serve you well in this place. Let's call these things in and through and for Christ's precious name's sake.

Amen. We can conclude with that glorious psalm of our shepherd's leading and shepherd's guiding Psalm 23.

Again a psalm we've covered plenty of times a psalm we all know of by heart but a psalm just to remind us just now for all the work we seek to do as overseers he is the ultimate and the only true good shepherd.

Psalm 23 in Scottish Psalter The Lord's my shepherd I'll not want he makes me down to lie and pastures going to lead with me the quiet waters by my soul he doth restore again and me to walk doth make within the paths of righteousness even for his own name's sake.

[61 : 08] Stand and sing if possible. The Lord's my shepherd I am on He makes me down to lie in pastures half give me the peace the quiet waters find in His hope Myruktur about her Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen.