

The Life of a Leader

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Preacher: Rev. Aaron Roberts

[0 : 0 0] folks uh one of the great things about summer is is people well it's not great that people go away but people go away and people come back and visitors come so for you visitors here this evening my name is Aaron I'm the minister here at St. John's for the service it's delightful to have you if you haven't met me before I apologize I have a ridiculous accent you won't understand a word I'm saying I'm sorry uh just smile and look like you're enjoying yourself if you can't if you don't get me I know I met my wife met a gentleman who drove up here on a Harley Davidson is that right where is that guy Harley Davidson is that right fantastic yeah Harley Davidson from Texas that's amazing that's amazing well done well done welcome welcome I met some nice people from England back here so tons of visitors say hi to them after the service let's get cracking so we are starting a new series uh seven weeks which is a minuscule series for St. John's to be honest seven weeks we're looking at Titus the life of a leader is the name of the sermon this evening it's a wonderful book

Titus uh we're gonna we're gonna get on with it first shortly but let me just make some introductory comments could you could you have your Bibles open because I'll be following the text quite quite closely if you look at verses five to nine and just kind of slide your eyes over there just as a reminder of what it says there are that's was it nine nine eight is that right nine nine eight when we look at this kind of list here of attributes all these kind of describing words quick tempered or self-controlled whatever uh we can make two mistakes when looking at just a little section of Titus here five to nine the the first mistake we can make is we can go well these these these these this these qualities here self-controlled upright holy way this is just for leaders this just applies to leaders so I'm kind of off the hook I'm fine that's the first mistake second mistake is we can look at it and we can go well this is just a kind of rules bunch of rules tick some boxes I'm okay you're okay now to address that second mistake I'll address both these mistakes to address that second mistake

I want to look at the first four verses because the context is really important in understanding when uh what Paul is doing right here in five to nine but first obviously the big context so Paul probably sometime after the book of Acts maybe after his Roman imprisonments probably the guest best the the best uh guests is as was traveling around as a missionary he went to Crete with a guy called Titus uh Paul left Crete Titus stayed Paul writes him a letter this is the letter Paul starts Paul a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ big boom it's a big start two very descriptive words here servant and apostle servant is uh one who is uh it's a slave like it's just it's a it's a nicer way of saying slave so this is somebody bought and owned right so so Paul is saying I've been bought and owned by God and then he says he's an also an apostle which is this title of authority it's a weighty title so Paul is the servant with this very special job that God has given him it's a big job and what does the job relate to well we can see it relates to uh God's elect in verse one there so Paul special job has got something to do with the church with God's people and it says and it says that it's uh Paul's job is to foster the faith but not just faith interesting here to foster their knowledge their faith and their knowledge two things which we might not put together naturally we might think mistakenly that they're actually uh intention with each other we might think they're actually the opposite of each other faith and knowledge but but they're not I mean the Bible puts them together right here and it makes complete sense faith in God trust in God is based on the knowledge of God and we're going to talk more about that soon there's more Paul goes on in verse one he says that this this knowledge this faith leads to godliness which is God centeredness which is uh godly living you see there the end of verse one which accords with godliness so how do we grow in godliness we we grow in faith and knowledge truth and how do we do that by listening to Paul amongst the other biblical writers of course by listening to the word of God put ourselves under the word of God and how do we do that well it has to be preached in order for that to happen which is what Paul says in verse three there okay at a proper time manifested in his word through the preaching which I have been entrusted by the command of God our savior okay that's all fairly socratic and sort of propositional uh not kind of heart stuff so let me remind you of a story I told last week just to bring this home do you remember I told you it was last week of the week before about a guy who um when I went to Rowena Slack's funeral no Derek Slack's funeral like four weeks ago and I spoke to a gentleman after the service I'm thinking he's he was an older gentleman he was a widower

I'm thinking he'll be quite sad I go up to him put on my very pastoral voice hello how are you you okay you know you okay you're doing okay and he said you know I haven't been this kind of stoked for ages I haven't been this happy for ages he heard this wonderful sermon it was a great sermon David Short preached he heard this wonderful sermon and out of hearing God's word his heart was lifted hope arose hope arose which the bible talks about here in the beginning of verse two they came out of this uh knowledge and truth of God okay let's let's move on back to the text I said we needed to sort of look over that because context is very important for the second half which is what I want to really focus in on okay so I said the first mistake sorry the second mistake is we can read this list in five tonight and go well it's just a bunch of rules do this be that I'm okay you're okay folks the heart at the heart of the biblical idea of godliness is not try hard to be nice that's that's that's not christianity although you should make an effort to be nice some of you some of you really should make an effort to be nice no the biblical heart of godliness it's not try hard to be nice the biblical heart of godliness is put god at the center of your life put yourself under his word and under his guidance and from that flows godly living that's the chain of events and that's really important because that is the foil to a christianity which is which is a veneer which is thin which is a phase which is counterfeit which is christianity which is just about being pleasant which is not christianity at all now paul is obviously very concerned about this as we look at verses five to nine he's he's very concerned about uh christianity that is ineffective or false you see the first thing he does is he wants titus and you know dodgy old crete he wants he wants titus to appoint leaders to appoint elders to his church plants it says there in verse five it's the first thing he wants them to do and what are these leaders going to do verse nine give instruction and sound doctrine this is what we've been talking about they do this because the preaching of god's word to the community of god's people produces godliness it produces authentic christianity so paul's goal is communities of authentic christians in crete so what does he do he says titus pick leaders that are going to preach the gospel don't just go around and tell everyone sort of you know how to be nice how to do good things see this is the big difference between christianity and other religions this is what separates us from the other great religions of the world is that christianity is not advice christianity is news christianity is not do this in order to connect with god christianity is news it is the gospel christianity says something has happened in history jesus lived he died to earn a place for you to earn a relationship with god christianity is news and telling people this news is what we do when we preach it's what we do when we're in our bible studies it's what we do in our in our quiet times with god and it's from this this preaching that hearts are changed and it's how we live differently when we talk about christian morality it's i know i've already said this but it's really important to get

that sequence right otherwise we're just no different from other faiths all that to say one sentence are these qualities listed in five to nine just a bunch of rules tick some boxes i do this i don't do that no they are byproducts of a life that is centered around god and knowing god through his word now the second mistake we can make is we can look in this and we can go oh it just says this is just for leaders sweet i'm totally off the hook and it does sort of go okay if you're looking you know if you're looking for leaders look for these things here but let me just let me just read through these attributes so it says don't be arrogant quick-tempered a drunkard violent greedy for gain but be hospitable a lover of good self-controlled upright holy disciplined let me say something very important here this is christian leaders are supposed to be like this say the good stuff for example christian leaders are supposed to be like this because this is expected of all christians this is just this is just christian living listen to the second list again arrogant quick-tempered drunkard violent greedy for gain these are not bad things that only the church leaders need to be concerned about this doesn't mean it's a free-for-all for you no we all need to avoid that stuff that stuff's just sin hospitable a lover of good self-controlled upright holy discipline these are not special qualities that only leaders need to be concerned about this is just godly living all that to say as we look closer at the passage remember you're not off the hook all right i've addressed these two mistakes let's have a closer look at the text so paul remember is telling titus to appoint leaders to preach the word and he wants people who demonstrate that they've had heart change holy spirit heart changes and you can see those heart changes in their life there is a slightly tricky bit here uh dc mentions in verses six and seven it says they should be above reproach in some translations that says blameless we hear blameless we hear perfect that's a tough call i mean i'm feeling okay i think dave's a bit in trouble a bit no like so chair i've choked that shirt mate unbelievable uh if that is the case if we if we read that as kind of like you know church leaders have to be perfect then and i'm supposed to be perfect and one of one of the things they describe as perfect here is or blameless is that your kids are supposed to be not insubordinate ever i have a three-year-old daughter you can't reason with a three-year-old daughter right she just wants what she wants that's it no amount of kiwi charm can sway her if she's being insubordinate does that mean i'm disqualified from leadership it also says leaders shouldn't be quick tempered i've lost my temper let me tell you a story maybe i've told you the story it happened a few years ago i'm on my way you know what a maundy thursday service is it's like that special service right maundy thursday so i'm preaching at that two years ago and i think i did tell you the story but it's a good example and so there's this guy driving behind me on the way to church he's in a big suv i'm in a small little rav4

[14 : 01] and every time i go around a corner he tries to overtake me on the inside and they're very dangerous he was a uh you've probably seen drivers like this they're bullies bigger cars they bully you on the road and sometimes they're just sort of bullies and jerks but sometimes they're really dangerous this guy was a quite a dangerous driver and he was trying to like kind of get me off the road so he could pass me so i'm getting really fired up about this i'm getting really angry and so we come to fraser and kingsway and i get out of the car and start walking i'm i'm not from vancouver clearly so i get out of the car and start walking towards his car because i'm going to have a chat to him i'm going to talk to him and educate him uh through loud words and uh noises and and um i'm walking towards the car and it's like i'm halfway there and i realize something i'm the preacher at the mawnday thursday service i'm wearing my collar like i am dressed as a priest walking towards this car about to like get you know verbally very aggressive with this man and so about two steps before the car it all dawns on me what's going on and what a terrible witness to the gospel this is and so over those two steps i calm myself down and when i get to the window because he's winding down his window ready to let rip and i'm like so everything okay yeah so i am so i have lost my temper does that disqualify me from my work here's the thing is that i am clearly not perfect uh david little is clearly not perfect none of the ministers are perfect your bible study leaders are not perfect uh what it's talking about here when it says above reproach it basically means this it means that there are any potential leader does not have any public accusations leveled against them there is no acute presenting visible problems here does that make sense there's no there's no public charges against them for some really big deal that kind of everyone knows about okay so paul is saying appoint leaders appoint leaders and uh here's the here's some qualities and then he gets kind of specific and he moves on to uh exact things and this is what i find very interesting the very first example he brings up when he's talking about morality of the leaders the very first thing he brings up is family isn't that interesting family he says in verse 6 they must be the husband of one wife and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination the very first thing he brings up when talking about the morality of the leaders is their family life why does he do that let me tell you why because your family life is where you are the most you

I am clearly a very nice guy I am the nicest and most sacrificial with my family but I am also a sinner and I am the most selfish and the most grumpy and the most sinful with regards to my family see family is where our sins are exposed the most I think and I'm very aware of this and I pray about different things in my prayer life but one refrain I have every day is this God help me to be a better husband and a good father because I know this is the there is no let me say it like this there is no other area in my life where I'm in need of Christ's help and forgiveness more than my family so I think that's why Paul brings this up first because it exposes us our family relationships I think the other reason Paul mentions it first is that it's a bit of a litmus test right you know if you can't if you can't manage to keep your kids under control well you probably can't keep a congregation on track either is I think what he's thinking now two side notes here there are many reasons kids can go off the rails some of those things are under your control some are not godly parents can have kids that are wild for reasons they can't control but where your children's behavior is a result of your lack of discipline or wisdom or love

Paul holds you accountable for that the second side note is the passage does not mean that you have to be married to be a church elder this would not line up with other passages that talk about leadership and other examples in the bible of leaders so there is an assumption here that if you are married this is what we're looking for moving on from the family in verse 7 and 8 Paul gives us a quick fire list of do's and don'ts that I've read out a hundred times I'm going to read them again because they're so good there are eleven traits listed five negative six positive here we go five negative arrogant quick tempered drunkard violent greedy for gain the six positive hospitable a lover of good self-controlled upright holy and disciplined I think a fair summary of this would be Paul is saying Titus find some people whose passions are under control and the fruit of the Holy Spirit is on display in their life now let's quickly go through them arrogant well we don't want leaders who lorded over people we don't want arrogant leaders because we don't want arrogant Christians quick tempered we don't want leaders who fly off the handle constantly because we don't want Christians who are bad tempered right drunkards this is a stressful job being a minister we don't want leaders who drink to cope in my country drinking heavily is a sign of strength ridiculously a sign of strength and it's one of the it is it's ridiculous right it's one of the most stupid aspects of my home country we don't want Christian leaders who are liberal in their drinking habits because we don't want Christians to be like that greedy for gain we don't want we don't want Christian leaders who are all about the money we don't want Christians that are like that the positive ones hospitable means literally like the friend of strangers lover of good self-controlled upright wholly disciplined folks this is not a crazy list this is just like this is just Christian living here this is expect

I expect this of all of us lastly Paul says this in verse 9 hold firmly to the trustworthy word as taught so that he may be able in to give instruction and sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it Calvin says this a pastor needs two voices one for gathering the sheep and the other one for driving away wolves and thieves so a leader it's true should lead by example but their biggest job was to preach and teach people have asked me quite often like what do you do all week man like seriously what do you actually do well I meet with people I do administration stuff I think about the future of the church and how we can get there but the best hours the absolute best hours of my work week I give to God's word I give to sermon preparation because of the Christian conviction that God's truth changes our hearts more than we can ever do on our own by just trying to be good and nice finishing up here

Paul has been talking about leaders for his churches in Crete and as I've been talking about leadership I wonder what's been going on in your hearts because I think I think we have a low view of leadership in the west in Canada there have been some recent political scandals you know in Quebec and Toronto I think for our American friends I think even the most staunchest Obama supporters are feeling a bit cynical now in a city like Vancouver we value individualism autonomy we tend to resist hierarchy you know in spite of all that in spite of this this climate of distrust of leadership of a low view of leadership the Bible holds it quite highly because we must realise that for Christianity to be effective in your life you need Christian leaders you need leaders who are well chosen who will guide who will teach you leaders who will preach the good news about the best leader ever who just using some of the words in our passage today who was never arrogant

[23 : 15] I mean he came down from heaven in the form of a baby on a scale of on the continuum of arrogance that's pretty low you know was he greedy for gain no like he he lost everything he gave away everything his whole life was he hospitable he prayed for those who crucified him was he holy of course he was God was he disciplined he set his face like a flint to Jerusalem to the cross we need godly leaders to point us to Jesus so that we might be godly folks that's the that's the big point here in this passage can I get a hearty amen amen amen yeah by se