

# Order In The Church

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[ 0 : 00 ] If I could just provide an update to you as to why we pray like that.

If you're new with us, just visiting with us, that might seem long and detailed and kind of odd that we would pray such a long, detailed prayer. We pray for those things every week.

We pray for a nation of the world every single week. We believe that the kingdom of God is bigger than all in all and is bigger than America. He intends for people from every tribe, tongue, and nation to come before the throne of God.

Last week, we prayed for the country of Bhutan. You all may remember that. We prayed that the church would be built in Bhutan, that laborers would be sent to Bhutan, that men and women would come to faith in this country that is closed off to the gospel.

We prayed that on Sunday. Tuesday morning, I get a call from a friend, a pastor friend, who is doing international ministry, branching away from his ministry in the local church to do ministry in East Asia, specifically asking me if I would like to be involved with his ministry in, of all the countries in the world, Bhutan.

[ 1 : 11 ] So if you wonder if God hears our prayers, the Lord is hearing our prayers at Sea Wee Bay. He is answering our prayers at Sea Wee Bay. So we will continue to offer up these prayers, that the Lord would send laborers to the uttermost ends of the earth and spread the gospel far and wide, that he might receive glory amongst the nations.

Amen? Amen. Let's open up our Bibles this morning to the book of Titus. The book of Titus. Last week, we began a new series in the book of Titus.

So if you're just joining us for the first time, you're coming at a very good time. We're just beginning this series in the book of Titus. Paul has left Titus in Crete. They have evangelized.

They've shared the gospel. And now Titus is there, left back there to continue the work. And here in verses 5 through 9 this morning, we see the reason why Paul left Titus behind.

So let's look there now. Titus chapter 1, verses 5 through 9. If you're using the Pew Bibles there in front of you, you can find that on page 938. So if you didn't bring a Bible of your own, I encourage you to open up that Pew Bible there in front of you, page 938.

[ 2 : 23 ] And we'll read this passage together. Paul says, This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order and appoint elders in every town as I directed you.

If anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife and his children are believers, and is not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach.

He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined.

He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine, and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

Amen. Let's pray once more. Lord, would you take this word and make it alive in our hearts? God, this word about elders is not just for those who are elders, or even those who aspire to be elders.

[ 3 : 40 ] It is for every Christian. And so we pray for attentive ears and attentive hearts to your word this morning. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.

Amen. This is why I left you in Crete, that you might put what remained into order.

We don't have to guess why Paul left Titus in Crete. We don't have to guess what Titus is supposed to be up to there in Crete. Paul tells us here in verse 5, I have left you in Crete, that you might put what remained into order.

You might remember from last week, Paul and Titus have traveled together to Crete with a call. And as we saw last week, their call is our call as well.

Their call as gospel ministers is our call as gospel ministers. It is to labor for the sake of the faith of God's elect. We saw last week election is connected to faith.

[ 4 : 42 ] All of God's elect will come to faith. That faith is connected to knowledge, knowledge of the truth, knowledge of the gospel, knowledge of who Christ is and what he has done.

That knowledge and that faith, Paul says, is connected to godliness. There are false teachers there in Crete who are saying the opposite. They say you can keep your faith, you can keep your knowledge, and you can go on living however you want.

You can keep your faith in Christ and continue to live in sin however you want to live. So Paul and Titus, they say, well, no, faith and knowledge accords with godliness.

That's their call to labor for the sake of the faith of God's elect. And we saw last week as well, their confidence is also our confidence. God's eternal promise, the promise of the hope of eternal life for any who would come to faith in Christ, for any who would trust in Christ.

And God's appointed means, the preaching of the word. The manifestation of hope in the hearts of the lost through the preaching of the words.

[ 5 : 50 ] Why do we share the gospel with our lost friends and family members and neighbors and co-workers? Why do we pray for countries across the world that they would hear the word of faith, hear the word of the gospel?

It's because faith comes through hearing and hearing through the word of Christ. That was last week. But now Paul says another step is needed.

The work is not complete. The saints are gathered, but they are not organized. Sometimes at my house, I don't want to blame anyone in particular.

Okay, we're all in on this. We all have a stake in this. From time to time at my house, a mess appears. It begins in one room, accumulates, spills out into the hall, into another room, into another room, up onto the tables, all over the floor.

And it becomes clear that it is now time to clean up. So Amanda and I, we try to give very clear instruction over and over and over again, repeating our clear instruction of how to help pick up this mess.

[ 7 : 03 ] But from time to time, my way of helping is to begin kicking toys and kicking books and kicking trucks into piles on the floor.

I don't even have to bend over. I just sweep my leg and assemble the mess into piles. And to me, that helps because now I can see the floor. We have pathways. We can walk.

There's some space on the table to eat. All the stuff is just gathered there into heaps. But that doesn't mean that the job is done. And there's still another step needed.

Those piles still need to be organized. And so that's the boy's job. Okay, come get these piles. Come get these assembled piles of toys and put them into their proper places.

Come get them and put them into order. Well, here in Titus chapter 1, the people of God are gathered. They are assembled.

[ 8 : 03 ] God has saved them. Churches are forming. But there's still another step needed. They need to be put into order. You see, verses 5 through 9 of chapter 1 here in Titus, they show us that the church is not just meant to be an assembly of believers.

It's meant to be an organized assembly of believers. There's a structure here. There's an order here. Paul says, put what remained into order.

And the first step of that order, Paul says, is to appoint elders. Appoint elders. Elders. Now, for some of you, I know organization is a four-letter word.

You don't think this way. You don't live this way. You do not care a thing about structure. And you may take that approach into the church. Maybe you've never given a single thought into how the church is meant to be organized.

If that's you, bless you. Welcome. Take note here in this passage. God has put order and structure into place in the church for your good. He's put leadership in the church into place with a certain set of qualifications that would lead you for your good, for your spiritual care, for your growth in Christ.

[ 9 : 25 ] It is good and it is right and it is good for you to know who it is that is keeping watch over your soul. That's the job of an elder.

Others of us, we go the other direction. And we can't breathe unless our life is nicely and neatly structured. We thrive on organization.

Our life has to be structured. And so we want sometimes the church to fit into certain organized boxes that make sense to you. And maybe you would organize it and model it after successful businesses or proven structures, proven organizational systems.

And if that's you, then take note in this passage. We submit every wish, every desire, every plan of ours for the church to God's plan for the church.

And to God's desire for the church, to God's way for the church. And we praise God that he has given us direction for how to structure the church.

[10:34] And for both types of people and for everyone in between, passages like this allow us to do as Charles Spurgeon said, To see what ministers ought to be and to pray that many such may be found in our churches.

And to pray that we would see men like this found in our churches. Now, if you're like me, when I read this text and I study these verses, the big question that comes to my mind as I read it is this. Why are elders such a big deal here? Why is Paul making such a big deal out of elders? Why is this the first step of order in the church?

I mean, of all the other things Paul could have said, establish a budget, organize your worship gatherings, draft up a constitution. His first step of order for the church is elders.

Why? Why? It's because elders are given by God to lead the church in reflecting and proclaiming the glory of God.

[11:44] That's a big sentence. I'm going to say it again because this is going to be our outline this morning. If you want to write this down, take a minute, just write these words down. This is going to be our flow for the morning. It'll help you follow along.

I'm going to say this one more time. Elders are given by God to lead the church in reflecting and proclaiming the glory of God.

First, we see that elders are given by God to lead the church. Elders are given by God to lead the church.

He says, appoint elders in every town. Elders in every town. Multiple elders, plural. Elders, plural. In every town, singular, meaning every town where there is a church.

Every individual local church is meant to be led by multiple elders. Well, what are those? And maybe you've come from a church background that didn't use that term, elder.

[12:49] Maybe you're not even sure what it is. Maybe your experience with an elder is not at all what this passage describes. And so we want to understand what the New Testament tells us that elders are.

The New Testament shows us elders are the spiritual leaders of the church. Now, this is going to get somewhat technical for a moment, but I want you to stick with me here.

This is going to be helpful for you. I think that we need to understand what the New Testament says an elder is before we can begin talking about what they look like and how they work. Okay?

So, what is an elder? Three words in the New Testament. Three words in the New Testament that these writers use for this one office in the church.

Three words used interchangeably all refer to this one office of elder. And we do this all the time. Okay? Amanda is my bride, my spouse, and my wife.

[13:47] Okay? Same Amanda. Three words to describe her. Bride, spouse, wife. The New Testament does the same thing with elder. One office, three words. The first word is presbyteros.

Presbyteros. You can try to write it down. That's okay. If you can't get that, that's all right. That's the word that we translate elder. Now, what does that sound like in your mind? It sounds like presbyterian, doesn't it?

And that's where we get that term. That's where that word comes from. Presbyteros. It means elder. That's the word here in verse 5. Paul says, appoint presbyteros, elders, in every church.

And at the heart of this word is ruling authority. Ruling authority. Leadership. So he says in 1 Timothy 5.17.

You can write that down for later. He says, Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.

[14:49] And so at the heart of being an elder is ruling or leading. They are the spiritual leaders of the church. And Timothy here, it says that some are set apart specifically for the role of leading through regular preaching and teaching.

Second word, episkopos. Episkopos. It means overseer. What does that sound like to you? It sounds like episkopal, doesn't it?

Episkopos. That's where that word comes from. Episkopos means overseer. But we know that Paul is not talking about two separate offices here. Not two different offices.

Because we see them right here together in the same passage. We see elder in verse 5.

Episkopos. Overseer. Here in verse 7. Paul says, appoint elders for an overseer must be above reproach.

He's using them interchangeably. Why would Paul begin talking about one thing? Talk about elders here in verse 5. And then shift entirely to talk about something else here in verse 7.

[15:55] He doesn't. He's using these two words to talk about the same thing. Elders. These spiritual leaders are also overseers of the church.

Guardians of the church. Stewards, as verse 7 says. Of the church. They are given by God to steward, to lead, to care for the church.

Third word. This one is the one that we are most familiar with as good Baptists here. It is poiemon. Poiemon.

Which means shepherd or pastor. Poiemon means pastor. The pastors, overseers, elders.

Again, whichever you call them. Same thing. Are given by God to shepherd the flock of God. Again, not just one pastor.

[16:52] Not just one. But multiple pastors, elders in every individual local church. And so Peter says in 1 Peter chapter 5. He says, I exhort the elders among you.

Elders, plural. Among you. They are with you. They are locking arms with you. Walking alongside you. Not overseeing you from a distance.

But here, locally, with you as your leaders. Peter says, shepherd the flock of God that is among you. Pastor the flock of God that is among you.

Pastor the membership of your local church. And again, if you don't think that this matters for you. If you don't think that this matters for you.

You may not fully understand what elders are. And what they are given to do for you. Elders are given by God to the local church to lead.

[17:52] And care for. And watch over. And shepherd you. You remember Ephesians 4.11. We studied that book several months ago. Ephesians 4.11.

God gave the shepherds and teachers. That is, pastors and teachers. Shepherds and teachers. To equip the saints for the work of ministry. For the growth and maturity of the body of Christ.

Pastors or elders are given by God to lead you for your spiritual good. Godly pastors. Shepherds, overseers, spiritual leaders.

Are a gift from God to the church. And lest you think I'm talking about myself. I hope I qualify for what this passage describes.

But lest you think I'm just talking about myself here. I want to be clear with you. When I study this passage, I'm thinking of men like Treg Hallman. Treg has been a gift to this church.

[18:57] Amen? To have a man like Treg to come and shepherd this congregation. To lead and to preach and to oversee this body through a time of transition.

A man who knows his Bible like the back of his hand inside and out. And is able to communicate. To give instruction and sound doctrine. To rebuke those who contradict it.

A man who is giving above and beyond the time that he has. In addition to his full-time work. To shepherd the flock of God here. That is a gift to the local church.

That is a gift. I'm thinking of men like the elders at First Baptist Mount Pleasant. Matt Tyler. Gino Anacleto. Stuart Hewlett.

Ken Lee. Steve Little. John Mays. Sam McNeil. Charles Reed. Rhett Rudolph. Larry Zimmerman. You all may not know this. These men.

[19:54] I've worked with them for the past year. To think and to plan and to prepare. For what is going on with the future of Seaweed Bay. Men who recognize that they cannot faithfully shepherd this body.

From down the road at McCance Drive. They recognize that they need to humbly work. And give Treg and myself the freedom. To lead this local church.

Towards autonomy. I praise God for men like that. Who serve the church selflessly. Sacrificially. When I study this passage.

I think of the men that we pray. God will raise up here. In the years to come. Treg just prayed. I know we've talked several times about this.

We desire to see this be a place. Where men would rise up to the level. And the status. To the office of elder. Here. Among us.

[ 20 : 49 ] Church. I want you to know what an elder is. And what an elder looks like. And how they act. So that you can join us in praying for more. And so that you would know what one is.

When you see it. And so maybe perhaps you might aspire to become one. Yourself. Second. Elders are given by God to lead the church.

How? To lead the church in reflecting the glory of God. To lead the church in reflecting the glory of God.

You may remember the issue here in Titus. Again false teachers have crept in. They said you can live however you want to live. People were falling into that lie. Believing that lie. So Paul says these churches need elders.

That's his answer. To the issue there in Crete. These churches need elders. Why? It's because elders are meant to be examples for the flock. They are examples and models of what godly living looks like.

[ 21 : 54 ] They are supposed to be. Doesn't always work out this way. They are supposed to be case studies for the fact that faith accords with godliness. That gospel doctrine leads to godly behavior.

So this is why Paul he lists out several qualifications here in verses 6 through 8. Verses 6 through 8. And I want you to notice here that these qualifications are not skill related.

There is one skill related qualification in this passage here in verse 9. They must be able to teach. We're going to get there in a moment. But all of these qualifications in verses 6 through 8 are character qualifications.

Character qualifications. Every single one of them. They say nothing of race or upbringing or social status or professional experience.

It says nothing of elders being the most successful businessmen in the church. They're not the most popular men in the church. They're not the richest men in the church. Elders are not just those who are highly educated.

[ 23 : 02 ] The seminary trained. Though I think that that's good and valuable and useful. Elders are those who lead in reflecting God's holy character.

In fact, what I hope that you'll see is that most of these qualifications for elders here in this passage are normal expectations for every Christian. And that's precisely the point.

Elders are not a separate class of Christian. They're set apart as imitable leaders in the local church. This is, I think, what makes it so difficult when pastors fall into sin.

Disqualify themselves from the ministry. I know you all have read the article, seen the stories of well-known pastors with public ministries. Maybe some of you have experienced that firsthand in your own local churches.

Pastors disqualifying themselves from ministry by falling into a snare of the enemy. It's heartbreaking because these men are meant to be imitable examples of goodness of God.

[ 24 : 10 ] To be reflections of the glory of God's godly character. Verse 6, Paul says, If anyone is above reproach, Paul says.

This is the big picture Paul gives us here. Every other qualification falls under this banner. Elders are to be above reproach. Not meaning that they're flawless.

Not perfect men. But godly. And there should be no charge that could be reasonably brought against an elder and stick. So twice he says this.

Once in verse 6 and again in verse 7. An overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. We should be able to look at an elder and say, That's the type of godly character that I aspire to.

And the watching world should be able to look at an elder and say, Man, there's something different about him. I can't bring any accusation against the character of that man. He says here, Elders are to be leaders in their home.

[ 25 : 10 ] They are the husband of one wife. Literally, that means a one woman man. One woman man. They are men who, if married, you don't have to be married, But if married, they are faithful to their wives.

He says their children are believers. Now, your Bible probably has a note there. If you have your Bibles open, it probably has a little number and a note there at the bottom to tell you that another way to translate that word is faithful.

Children are faithful. And I think that that is Paul's intention here. That same word, *pistis*, Greek word, can either be translated believing or faithful.

And for several reasons, I don't believe that having regenerate believing children is a requirement for being an elder in the local church. One of those reasons is what Paul says in 1 Timothy 3.

If you would, just turn there with me quickly. 1 Timothy 3. Just a few pages to the left. 1 Timothy 3. This is a parallel passage to the passage that we're studying this morning.

[ 26 : 23 ] 1 Timothy 3. Paul is saying the same things here to Timothy. He's giving qualifications for elders and qualifications for deacons. And so you'll see some of the similarities of what he's saying here.

1 Timothy 3. He says, 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. He's not a drunkard. He's not a drunkard.

Not violent, but gentle. Not quarrelsome. Not a lover of money. Now, verse 4. He must manage his own household well, With all dignity, Keeping his children submissive.

Not believing. Not regenerate. Keeping his children submissive. Obedient. Faithful. For if someone does not know how to manage his own household well, How will he care for God's church?

[ 27 : 34 ] Does someone aspire to be an elder? Well, if he's married, is he faithful? Is he a one-woman man? Is his wife following his spiritual leadership in the home?

Are his children, children who are still in the home under his authority, Are they out running wild? Or are they being raised in the discipline and instruction of the Lord?

Are his children open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination? Is he hospitable? Now, we don't normally think about that as a qualification for elders, do we?

Is he hospitable? But there it is in verse 8. Is he leading his home to be a place of gospel ministry? And the point is this. If a man cannot care for his own wife, how can he care for the bride of Christ? If a man cannot faithfully oversee his own children, how can he care for the children of God? If a man's home is not a place of gospel ministry, how can he lead the household of God to be a place of gospel ministry?

[ 28 : 39 ] If someone does not know how to manage his own household well, how will he care for God's church? Not only this, Paul says elders are also to reflect God's glory by being visibly distinct from the world.

By being visibly distinct from the world. Look at that list again with me here in 6 through 8. All the things that they are not. They are not arrogant, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not greedy for gain.

This is weird behavior in a fallen world. This is weird behavior for fallen men and fallen women in a fallen world.

You listen to how people talk about themselves, about others, how they speak on social media.

Pride and arrogance is normal in this world.

You drive down Highway 17 for about 5 minutes, you will find someone who is quick-tempered. It should not be so in the church.

[ 29 : 52 ] Especially among those who are leaders in the church. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control.

To be slow to anger, long-suffering. That reflects the glory of God. God is patient with us. You know in the world, drunkenness is normal.

Violence is normal. Greed is normal. These things are completely ordinary and normal in the world. But church, Christians are those who have been redeemed from the world.

But we don't share those same values anymore. We have had our hearts transformed from the inside out. So now we are weird in the world.

We do not belong. We are distinct. You know, something happens when you're a pastor. I don't know if you know this or not. I can speak to someone, introduce myself to someone, and we can carry on a conversation for an hour, maybe two hours if I'm lucky.

[ 30 : 58 ] And they'll be totally free to be themselves, foul language, foul behavior, just totally free. But then the second that they ask me, well, what do you do?

Oh, I'm a pastor. Things tighten up a little bit, don't they? And it's not because I've said anything judgmental.

It's not because I've expected them to be different or to act differently. It's because they know I'm weird. They can sense it.

They can smell it, even if I don't say anything. Something is different here. What they don't know is what is at the root of that difference.

They can see visibly a difference in behavior with their eyes, but what they don't know is that the root of that different behavior is a different heart.

[ 31 : 55 ] A different heart. A heart that is transformed by the grace of God. Elders are, verse 8, they are lovers of good. Lovers of good.

That's what it says in verse 8. As Christians, by the grace of God, our hearts have been transformed, changed from the inside out to hate what is sinful and to love what is good.

That's what it means to be a Christian. You have been redeemed from the world, redeemed from your slavery to sin. And by the grace of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, you heard the word proclaimed and that hope was manifested in your heart.

And your heart has now been freed to love the highest and greatest good in all the universe. To love God himself. Your heart has been freed to love what it was made to love and to live as you were made to live.

And from that love comes radical life change. From that faith in Jesus Christ comes godliness. Faith accords with godliness.

[ 33 : 05 ] Repentance from sin. And so that's seen now in your life in these weird behaviors of love, joy, self-control, uprightness, holiness, discipline.

That makes us strange in a world that loves sin and hates God. We are distinct. Elders must demonstrate these qualities because they show the church and the world that our hearts have been transformed by the glory of the gospel of Jesus Christ to reflect the glory of God.

But not just that. One more point. Third and finally, elders are given by God to lead the church in reflecting and proclaiming the glory of God.

There is one qualification here that is unique to the office of elder. Verse 9. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

They must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught. We don't want flimsy elders in the church.

[ 34 : 33 ] We don't want elders who have a weak grip, who lead from their own opinions, who lead from culture, who lead from pragmatism, whatever seems to work.

We want elders whose knuckles are white from gripping this trustworthy word as taught, who will lead from the truth, who make it their aim to hold firm and proclaim the glory of God in this word.

This word is what the church needs beyond anything else. Do you believe that? You know, when I talk about the church, many times you talk about the church with others and you begin talking about what grows the church.

What's the game plan for Seaweed Bay to make this church grow? What's the plan for us launching out as a local church? You know, people want to hear something new.

They want to hear something exciting. And people are drawn to innovation, newness. And sometimes, I'll be honest with you, I just, I kind of feel silly. I've been called old-fashioned for many reasons, many times.

[ 35 : 47 ] I'm getting used to it. I don't know what else to say, church. Seaweed Bay, our mission as a church is to magnify the glory of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

To magnify the glory of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ. There's three parts to that mission. It's to enjoy God. It's corporately here.

That's what we're doing. We're delighting ourselves in the Lord as we go out to our workplaces and our families together. We are enjoying the glory of God. It's to equip the saints, to equip one another for the work of ministry, to train and to disciple and to invest in one another's growth.

We don't want to just see converts just come to faith in Christ and left behind as babes in Christ. We want to bring you to maturity in Christ. And it's to evangelize.

It's to share the gospel with the lost. All three of those. You can't do a single one of them apart from the word. The word is at the center of the ministry of the church.

[ 36 : 59 ] The word is at the center of the heartbeat of every Christian. When you look for a church, again, maybe you're new here with us, visiting with us, welcome.

Sometimes I get a little hyped up. When you look for a church, what is most important to you? Is it the ministries that they offer? Is there a thriving children's ministry? The programs? How busy the calendar is? How people dress? Whether or not you like the music? Or is it whether or not the word of God is proclaimed? If that is not at the center, everything else falls apart.

None of the rest of it matters. See, Paul says a good shepherd, a good elder, must be able to give instruction in sound doctrine.

[ 38 : 00 ] That is vital. Because that's what's at the heartbeat of every Christian. And that's what's at the heartbeat of every healthy church. We live on the word of God.

Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. A good shepherd feeds the sheep with the word.

And he protects the sheep from wolves. Protects the sheep from wolves. This is what Paul tells his young pastor friend Timothy.

2 Timothy chapter 4. He says, I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing in his kingdom, preach the word.

Be ready in season and out of season. Reprove, rebuke, and exhort with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching.

[ 39 : 08 ] But having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

Church, that time has come. And it is happening all over the world. Churches wandering off into myths.

Men and women accumulating for themselves teachers who will suit their own passions, turning away from listening to the truth because it's not what they want to hear. It's not what they would say. It's not what's comfortable or affirming for them. elders are given to the church to say, not here. Not here. Not in this place.

Not here with these people. My people. Not here with these precious sheep under our care. These precious sons and daughters of God that he has entrusted to us in our care.

[ 40 : 10 ] Not here. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. And we will proclaim this word. We will not entertain lies of the enemy. Here. Not here. Not in this place.

A good shepherd feeds the sheep and drives away the wolves. Both parts are necessary here. Some of you know the blessing of having godly leadership.

I know you know it because of who's been leading you here. I've been incredibly blessed myself to work under and alongside some of the very best, most godly, Bible-saturated men in the world. Every one of them to a man would tell you that their role ultimately is to lead you to Jesus. It's to lead you to Jesus.

It's to show you Jesus. It's to open up this book and proclaim Jesus. If you don't know him, it's to lead you for the first time to faith in Jesus. You see, pastors are pointers.

[ 41 : 18 ] We point you to Christ. He must increase. We must decrease. And you know what would thrill me and drag more than anything? As if you grew in your love for Christ.

As if you grew in your hunger and your love and your obedience to Jesus. Not to hear, wow, what a great sermon. None of y'all are probably in danger of saying that to me anyways.

Maybe to Treg. Maybe to Treg. But to say, wow, what a wonderful Savior we worship. What a wonderful God we worship.

What a good, glorious King we worship. It's about Jesus. Elders are to lead and reflecting God's glory.

Christ alone is the perfect reflection of the glory of God. He alone is the very image of the invisible God. He is God in the flesh.

[ 42 : 19 ] elders are to lead the local church in proclaiming the glory of God. Christ is the word of God. The perfect word.

The embodiment of life and truth. The word of God became flesh and dwelt among us. Church, we just read Psalm 23. What a beautiful passage that is.

The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. The Lord is my shepherd. He leads me. He guides me. He cares for me.

He restores my soul. He feeds me. He watches over me. He loves me. You know, Jesus takes this passage, this beloved Old Testament passage, and he says in John chapter 10, he says, I am the good shepherd.

I am the good shepherd. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly.

[ 43 : 23 ] The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He says, I have other sheep who are not of this fold.

I must bring them in also. And they will listen. To my voice. Maybe you've joined us this morning and you have been burned or hurt, disappointed by a pastor.

Disappointed by a leader. An elder has failed you. Friend, look to Jesus. He will never fail you.

Maybe you're here and you've been blessed by godly leadership.

Praise God for that. Thank Jesus. Look to Jesus. The best earthly leadership can only point you to him as the perfect shepherd king. And maybe you are here and you are one of these sheep who are not yet of the fold of God.

Would you come to Jesus? Would you repent of your sin and come to Jesus? This loving shepherd who invites you now to come and to trust in him that he would lead you and shepherd you and guide you and care for you if you would only turn and submit yourself to him.

[ 44 : 52 ] Would you look to Jesus and trust in him? Listen to his voice. Let's pray. Father again we thank you that you have thought well about how you want your church to function.

That you have given elders as a gift to the church to lead and to guide and to oversee to protect and most importantly to point us to Christ.

And we pray that Christ would be the center of who we are as a church that this message of the gospel would be the heart of what we proclaim as a church and that we would leave here thanking you and praising you for the ways you have led us to the foot of your throne to worship the living God.

We love you Father and we pray this in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.