

(Titus - Part 8): Qualifications for Church Leadership II

by A.W. Tozer

Church leaders must be blameless, hospitable, and sound in doctrine, with a right relation to God, self, and others.

Duration: 27:19

Scripture: Titus 1:7

Topics: "Titus"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the three directions that believers should focus on during Communion Sunday: looking backward to the cross, upward to the throne, and onward to Christ's coming. He emphasizes the importance of having faith and seeking the face of the Lord. The preacher also highlights the qualities that leaders in the church should possess, such as being lovers of good and good men, and being blameless in their domestic relations and homes. Additionally, he emphasizes the significance of holding fast to the faithful word of sound doctrine and using it to exhort and convince others.

Transcript

Now we'll turn to Titus again, the first chapter. That first chapter, we'll begin with verse 7. You'll remember that we broke off there, said it was too much for last week, and we'll talk a little about what the qualifications of church leaders. And it's entirely scriptural if we make this apply to any church leader.

Paul's talking particularly here about elders, presbyters, bishops. But any church leader would come under this description. And this man of God, Paul, is telling another man of God, Titus, the qualifications of a man or men placed in leadership in the church.

And I ask you to notice one thing here, which is in glaring contrast to our usual way of judging things. Do you notice that intellectual qualifications are completely missing? That's strange. Unless where it says sound in faith, informed, and with ability to expound and expose, that would assume at least a fair degree of intellectual power.

But the qualifications here are not intellectual. They are not what we would call gifted men in the human way of looking at it. He says that they are to be blameless, and then he defines blameless as meaning in

our domestic relation, husband or one wife, and in our homes, having faithful children, keeping a decent house, and not stubborn, self-willed, not with a bad temper, and not giving to wine, and not so physical as to try to get your way by using your fists.

That seems almost ludicrous here, but it's here. We remember to whom this is written. Remember that it was Paul that wrote it to the Cretans, to Titus, about the Cretans, and what kind of people they were.

We can understand. It would be quite understandable for people brought up as they were, an old deacon to try to get obedience by slapping somebody around. Paul said no.

Then, not given to filthy lucre. We mentioned that, but we'll hook on there. Not given to filthy lucre.

That shows that he's free from covetousness. Nobody in the Church, nobody, should have any place in the Church if it can be truthfully said about him that he's a lover of money. Now, I want you to notice the word lucre here.

It's a very old word. Once, it was a good word. Now, it has been in such a bad company that it's a delinquent.

But the word gain in the Scripture is not a bad word, and the Scripture says that a man should seek gain. That is, he should work. He's a farmer.

He should till his soil. The Book of Proverbs has many sharp things to say against a man who lies around, lets the grass grow and the weeds, and doesn't till his soil. Paul has some sharp things to say about the fellow that went from house to house, loafed around and wouldn't work.

He said everybody ought to work in order that they might have to give to them that are in need, the sick, the poor. So that there's nothing here said against honest gain. But when it becomes lucre, then it's filthy.

Honest paycheck isn't filthy. An honest increase in your farm income isn't filthy. But when it becomes lucre, incidentally, that's the same word from which our lucrative comes.

We say we want our sons or daughters to have lucrative jobs. Well, the word lucrative is not bad, but the word lucre is bad. Strange how language goes.

But this word lucre here almost means loot. Not quite, but almost. It means money which is received beyond the proper amount, and particularly money received in an attitude of drooling, covetous delight.

He said that's filthy. It's not the money that's filthy, it's the attitude that makes it so. Well, everybody ought to know that a man of God, if he loves money, he's not a man of God.

Jesus said plainly that we weren't to love it, that we were to ask our Heavenly Father and He would take care of us. We were to give freely and not worry about it. The Lord knew, and the Father would take care of us, and He's always done that.

Now, verse 8, it says he's hospitable. And here is another qualification for a man in position in a church. Hospitable, what does that mean? Well, it follows, according to all that I can learn, the customs in those days, custom in those days, the missionaries and workers like Paul and Silas and Barnabas and Mark and such traveled from place to place.

Paul names many of them in his letters. They went from place to place, and they traveled on a shoestring practically. They were always under pressure, and there was never a red carpet rolled out for them.

Somebody grabbed a gray rock instead of a red carpet and was ready to throw rocks, and they were always in trouble. And when they got into a town, they couldn't go to a hotel, granted there were any. If there was a hotel in the neighborhood, they couldn't go to it.

So the Christians threw their homes open to these traveling preachers. And here is what it's meant. This doesn't mean invite your relatives in.

That's something to do, but that's good to do, and it's just taken for granted that's all right for your relatives to visit and exchange visits and have them come and go. That's taken for granted. But now this hospitable, according to all the commentators and translators, seems to refer to the way they did it then, traveling about, and they threw their homes open to the traveling preacher.

John, you'll remember, warned against throwing their home open to the wrong kind of preacher. He said, if you throw your home open to a false teacher, you've partaken of his evil deeds. You've contributed to his delinquency, John said.

So here is hospitality. Then there's verse 8. He's a lover of good, or a lover of good men. Sometimes the translators don't know whether an adjective good or evil means an abstraction or a personality.

For instance, in the Lord's Prayer, deliver us from evil. Translators don't know whether evil is a noun or an adjective exactly. They don't know whether that should be deliver us from the evil one or deliver us from evil.

In either way, it doesn't matter. And here again they're troubled. They don't know whether Paul said a lover of good men or a lover of good.

But in either case it's all right because it simply means that the man's one quality or qualification of a worker in the church should be that he loves good and naturally loves good people. The question is, where is your affinity? I'd like to ask you that. Where is your affinity? Now I don't ask you where you spend time because some of you spend time working where everybody's evil and you can't help it.

But where is your affinity? Where would you go when you're free to go where you would? And where do you feel at home? And what kind of people do you seek? Whirlings? If whirlings, it ought to be found out. And oh, one should be accepted as a good Christian who finds himself at home among whirlings. He may have to go and be among whirlings.

He may have to do that. Some of you work in places and you just have to be present and there are gatherings to which you have to go. You go and you don't like it and you get away as soon as you can and you don't partake of any evil deeds but it's a part of your job.

So it isn't a question of where you have to go sometimes but it's a question of where do you feel at home? Where is your affinity? Where are you at rest? What's your kind of people? We ought to ask ourselves that. Is it among the whirlings or is it among the lukewarm? There are Christians that have gone far enough that they don't enjoy being among whirlings with their off-color jokes and their liquor but they don't enjoy being among the saints either. There's a middle twilight zone of lukewarm people that they're good, decent people and nothing can be said against them but they're not going to embarrass you by talking

about the Lord too much.

They're not going to suggest we pray before we part and nobody's going to bring up a Bible question. They're just going to have a chit-chat and coffee-clutch style. If it's women, it'll be the latest sack or whatever they call them.

And if it's men, it'll be whether the tail fin is 41 inches high or only 38 and harmless and perfectly harmless but not spiritual. Where is your affinity? Then the saints. There's another group.

There are some people that are never at home except among the saints. Get among people like, say, Tom Hare. You can't get him to talk about much of anything else only the Lord and yet, strangely, he doesn't embarrass you with it.

It just seems a natural thing. It just seems normal for him to be talking about the Lord and about what he calls fith spelled f-a-i-t-h and seeing the fists of the Lord spelled f-a-c-e and so he has fith and sees the fists of the Lord and he wants to talk about it. He'll talk about other things and even joke if he insists but if you let him alone he gravitates like a needle back to the fists of God and the things of God.

Well, is that where you belong? Is that where you feel at home? I think that everybody on an official board in a church ought to qualify as a lover of good and a lover of good men. And I can't see how a church can hope to have the blessing of God on it if it tolerates people in places of leadership who are not lovers of good men who feel at home among lukewarm or worldliness and going on sober not flighty, that means I think it has nothing to do with liquor they dealt with that above when it said that he was not to be a lover of wine not reckless, not irresponsible, and not excitable.

I've talked this over with some of my friends in days gone by here and there pastors know this people, gifted people, good people and yet irresponsible people that you just can't trust with leadership the church can't trust them with leadership they're irresponsible they think it's freedom but it's not freedom, it's irresponsibility they will not wear a yoke take my yoke upon you and they will not wear a yoke now you can't say they're going to hell, they're not they'll go to heaven by the grace of God the way we'll all go but they are unbroken colts a colt is lovable and lively but no good because it has not yet worn harness or a saddle and there are Christians that are a long way from being colts that just will not wear any harness they won't they say that they don't believe they should

because that's contrary to Paul's doctrine of liberty but Paul was very careful to teach that while we had all kinds of liberty we must lay a lowly responsibility on ourselves for Christ's sake and for the sake of the church but there are those who are not willing to do that so they're irresponsible reckless, somewhat excitable somewhat flighty and while you like them, you can't trust them and there are thousands of them in the churches then he says, just verse 8 that is honest toward every man holy, verse 8 that is their relation to God and temperate, verse 8 that is your relation to yourself and there we have again that famous triangle to which I call attention so often our relation to God, to ourselves, and to our fellow men Paul calls it soberly, righteously, and godly further on in

his epistle here he calls it just, holy, and temperate the temperate man is a man who's in right relation to himself the holy man is one who's in right relation to God and the just man is one who's in right relation to every man did you say I haven't always been? well, start now start this communion service and get in right relation to every man you can't hope, you can't even hope to go back and undo all you've done but you can start now and I love that beautiful part about the scripture behold, he maketh all things new begin

here, begin now and Eckhart says the man who turns to God God will trust him as if he'd never done anything wrong starts now, God starts now now is the accepted time God's nows so the just man is the man who's honest toward his fellow man the holy man is right in his

relation to God and the temperate man is right in relation to himself then sound in faith and according to Paul here, verse 9 he's got to hold fast the faithful word we must remember that Paul was not a technical man that is, he wouldn't crucify you on a technicality but he also was not a careless man this is the age of creedless religion we don't believe in anything particularly we just love people just love people, just love everybody and love the Lord and love everybody and so Jews, Catholics, Christians and Buddhists all gathered together around this simple place of worship, fellowship and all going the same direction so they said but Paul said, holding fast the faithful word of sound doctrine Paul was a doctrinarian, don't forget it he said love was everything but he also made

doctrine to be the direction love took and out of doctrine sprang love so the leader in the church has to be man who holds fast the faithful word no loose ideas, no personal interpretations but the faithful word that he may be able by sound doctrine I said there was no intellectual qualification mentioned here unless it was this one that he may be able by sound doctrine to exhort and to convince the gainsayer he had to be able to do two things he had to be able to expound and expose he was an informed man who knew the scriptures with ability to expound and expose expound is the positive, expose is the negative expound is to tell what the scripture says expose is to show where teachers are wrong and if you want an example of that go to Galatians or Colossians or 1 John there were some

pretty sharp exposes showed up people for what they were so a good leader of the church has got to be informed and then he's going to have to have ability to expound, that is teach in some degree and to show what is wrong so that people don't end in the wood just as sure as you live a church that gets careless about its doctrine will land in the same place that a man will who gets careless about watching the signs if he's traveling across the country he'll end up somewhere in a dead end street in a farmer's backyard and that's the sound doctrine is the clear marked highway and while it isn't everything it leads to God and it is so vastly important that it dare not be neglected every church should be doctrinally sound and never should we allow a smiling countenance or a friendly broad

religious latitudinarianism the broad expansiveness of thought that takes in everybody never allow that to lead you astray if you take in everybody pretty soon we'll all be down on the same level and we'll all be without God and without sound faith so he says the church leader has got to have faithful word and sound doctrine and follow what he's been taught in the word of God and be able to expound it so others can get it and to defend it so that the gainsayers and vain talkers in verse 10 will not upset the children of God now that's all for this morning for really that's an addenda or a PS on last week's talk as we're going as Newell would say verse by verse through the scripture and since this is communion Sunday I ask you now to just let that lie in your minds and turn to think of

something else for just a minute and that is as we prayed yesterday something came into my mind the three preachers were in prayer and something came into my mind and it just occurred to me that I should tell you this today although of course it's old to you this communion Sunday we gaze look, look, look says the scripture, look and this communion Sunday we look three ways backward to the cross upward to the throne and onward to his coming now that's the three directions don't look all at the same time we meditate some on the cross then we meditate on the throne and then we meditate on his coming these are the three directions this morning it's backward to the cross the cross if we look backward to the cross too

much we tend to religious morbidity if we do not look backward to the cross

then we tend to religious liberality without the cross we must look backward to the cross often and much and meditate often but we mustn't forget to look upward to the throne for the Christ who died on the cross is not now on the cross the Christ who was dead is not now dead I think some of our friends of other certain other groups meditate on the death of Christ so much that they forget the life of Christ they know it if you ask them they say oh sure he rose from the dead that's taught in our church but that's not where the emphasis falls the emphasis falls on the dead Christ if I were in a hospital and my last end had come and I knew I had but a few hours and somebody stuck a crucifix in my hand I would be depressed so I'd become gloomy two dead men there in the bed two dead men Jesus

and me how could we help each other? only a live man can help a dead man he died but he's not dead but we gaze for a while upon his cross but we don't stop there we turn our eyes to the open tomb and to the throne and the Christ we adore is a living Christ alive forevermore and I want to know he died if I'm dying for I want to know that he I can follow his footsteps into the gloom as they say but when you get into the gloom you'll find it all shiny with light but I also want to know he came out of that gloom and he's in a position to help me a live man can help the dead man the two dead men in the bed can't help each other so don't give me a crucifix when I'm dying then we look onward to his coming onward to his coming we do show forth the Lord's death till he come now the choir is going

to sing for us we haven't forgot them we just changed the order a little and I want you reverently to listen and please don't listen to the music and don't listen to know whether they're on pitch they will be but if somebody shouldn't be don't let that bother you we're not listening this is not a music hall this is a church so this morning the choir is going to sing a number I have long loved and I asked Brother McAfee whether it wouldn't be nice if I'd read it and he said it would written by Paul Gerhardt a German brother Paul Gerhardt was a Moravian and he wrote this O sacred head once wounded with grief and shame bowed down now scornfully surrounded with thorns thine only crown O sacred head what glory what bliss till now was thine yet though despised and gory I'd joy to call thee mine

what thou my lord has suffered was all for sinners gain mine mine was the transgression but thine the deadly pain lo here I fall my savior tis I deserve thy place look on me with thy favor vouchsafe to me thy grace what language shall I borrow to thank thee dearest friend for this thy dying sorrow for pity without end O make me thine forever and should I fainting be Lord let me never never outlive my love for thee be near me be near me when I'm dying O show thy cross to me and to my succor flying come Lord and set me free these eyes new faith receiving from Jesus shall not move for he who dies believing dies safely through thy love we gaze back to the cross we gaze up to the throne we gaze onward to his coming

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