

# (Titus - Part 9): Qualifications for Church Leadership Iii

by A.W. Tozer

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*The importance of sound doctrine in the church and the nature of truth according to the Bible.*

**Duration:** 33:31

**Scripture:** Psalm 19:1, Matthew 6:33, John 14:6, 1 Corinthians 2:9, Ephesians 4:14, 2 Timothy 3:16, Titus 1:9

**Topics:** "Titus"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the absolute nature of the word of God. He describes it as a divine revelation that tells us what we need to know about God, although it does not reveal everything. The preacher emphasizes the importance of not compromising or modifying the teachings of the Bible. He also criticizes the tendency of some Americans to take their democracy for granted and adopt borrowed convictions without critical thinking. The preacher concludes by stating that true faith is not mere conformity, but a personal belief that is passed down from generation to generation.

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## Transcript

...by clause and almost word by word. In the ninth verse of the first chapter, we hear the Holy Spirit say that a bishop, a presbyter, a teacher, a leader, a pastor, must have, among other things, these qualifications. He must hold fast the faithful word of sound doctrine.

We want to talk about that today. Now, among the qualifications for Christian leaders, this is one. That he may hold fast the word of sound doctrine so he can do three things.

Teach the teachable, correct the mistaken, and silence the false teachers. These three things are mentioned here. That he can teach those who are teachable.

You can't teach any other kind. That he can correct those who are teachable but mistaken. And then that he can squelch the gainsayers convince them, at any rate, those who are contentious and argumentative and take positions which are not tenable according to the scriptures.

Now Christ and the apostles and the church fathers held that there is a fountain out of which truth proceeds. This was part of the teaching of Christ. This was taken up by the apostles and was taught by them.

The same Holy Spirit teaching them has taught the church fathers later that there is a fountain out of which all truth proceeds. So that Christ and his church are not searching for truth. They have found it.

Christ is himself that truth. I suppose that there is scarcely anything a man may set himself to do or claim for himself that is any more comforting to his carnal ego than to imagine himself as a searcher for truth. I have talked to many intelligent people, otherwise intelligent, who assured me that they were seekers after truth.

But I want you to hear that Christ was not a seeker after truth. Christ was the truth. Christ is the truth.

And his apostles were not seekers after truth. Neither did the church fathers claim to be. They of course searched in the truth that they might know more of the truth.

But the idea that they did not know where the truth was found, but that they were out searching up and down the universe throughout all the corridors of possible human thought, that they might locate the truth, that is a pagan concept and is not Christian and was never uttered by Christ. Not one such idea ever entered the mind of an apostle. And the church fathers, so far as they held by the truth, never uttered any such ideas.

They believed that there is a criterion against which all ideas are to be judged. That there is not, as some believe, a relativity of truth, but that there is an absoluteness of truth. Some truth, of course, may be pragmatic and relative, the truths that are down here in this world, the truths between men and men, the truths among nations.

But the Christian truth is not a relative thing nor a pragmatic thing. It is an absolute thing. It is spoken from the heart of truth.

It flows out of the fountain of truth. It is the criterion against which all supposed truths are judged. And our fathers believed, along with Christ and his apostles, that there is a divine revelation, the same fountain, the same criterion, but now a divine revelation telling us what we need to know.

Not telling us everything, but telling us what we need to know about God. The Bible does not tell us everything about God. To believe so would be nonsense.

If it could be said properly of Christ that everything he did, if they were written in a book, would fill the world, the world could not indeed contain them, then how much more could it be said that if everything that could be known about God were to be put down in a book, we would not have one small volume like this. We would have shelf after shelf filling the world and rising thousands of miles into the air in all directions. For God being the infinite, God cannot have all that's known, all that can be known about him revealed.

So the Bible does not tell us all that can be known about God. It simply tells us all that we need to know about God. That's quite a difference.

And so that the Christian is not one who is reading through all the philosophy of the Greeks to find out about God. He believes the scriptures tell him all that he needs to know about God. In addition, of course, to the revelation he has within his own heart, in his human conscience, and in nature.

For the heavens declare the glory of God. Then he believes also that there is a divine revelation which teaches him all he needs to know about man and all he needs to know about moral responsibility and

about sin and about salvation and that this revelation has validity and veracity and authority and finality. There are those, I suppose, who would say that this is a very narrow view of things.

This is Christ's view of things and this is the view of all the apostles and of the church fathers. That this revelation, this fountain, this criterion, this revelation has validity and veracity but has also full authority and finality and that it is either or. Christ said, He that is not with me is against me.

You're either for me or you're not. You're on my side or you're not. No compromising, no modifying, no editing.

There it stands, the holy book of God. And this criterion, this revelation, we call the holy scriptures. Now that's what Christ taught and that's what the apostles believed and that's what the church fathers held and that's what the founder of every one of the major denominations believed.

Whatever their children believed, that's what the fathers believed. That's what John Knox believed, the founder of the Presbyterian church. That's what John Wesley believed, the founder of the Methodist church and that's what John the Baptist believed, the founder of the Baptist church.

And that is what the fathers believed. That's what Luther believed, who founded what's known as the Lutheran church. Every reputable Christian denomination, the fathers and founders of those denominations, believed what I have said, that along with Christ and the apostles, that there is a fountain, a criterion, a revelation, which is full enough for us to spend a lifetime studying, which is authoritative and final and thus the Holy Ghost says a teacher should be one who is convinced of the faithful word and who holds sound doctrine.

Now, there are some who believe contrary to this and while I rarely do this, I want to take time out to step aside a little bit and notice this. For there are those who believe otherwise than what I have stated and if they do so believe, this is their right. As free moral agents, they have a perfect right to believe what they want to believe if they're willing to pay the price and take the consequences.

For not all men have faith, said Paul, therefore we're not to be indignant because not all men have faith just as not all men have sight and not all men have hearing. But faith that is mere conformity is not faith at all. The faith of our fathers is not an operative, efficacious faith until it becomes the faith of their sons.

Merely to believe something because you were brought up in a church that believes it is to indicate that you are taking your beliefs second hand and borrowing your convictions. Borrowed convictions never mean anything to any man. I believe I'll step further aside if you can step aside from where you've stepped aside and say that the problem and trouble with America today is that so many good Americans take their democracy for granted and they have borrowed their conceptions, they've not thought them through and the result is they're victims of whatever winds of doctrine may blow from Moscow or somewhere else.

Borrowed convictions and ideas that are inherited are of no value whatsoever. I believe in the faith of our fathers but I'll not rest until the faith of my fathers becomes the faith of their son. And when the faith of the fathers becomes the faith of their children then their children will have the same power and position and hold the same position as they.

I say I do not believe in enforced faith. We should set the truth before men and we should show them that faith is impossible to pride and that there must be penitence before there can be faith and we should warn them of the consequences of impenitence then we should leave them to their God and their conscience.

For Christians that are made under pressure are not Christians at all.

They bear the same relation to a true Christian as a cultured pearl bears to a real pearl or a plastic flower bears to a flower that blossoms in the garden. Now there's a strange incongruity among those who hold otherwise and there are many and they're getting more to be more of them every day They hold that the Bible is not a fountain out of which truth proceeds that it is not a criterion against which religious ideas may be judged that it is not a revelation a valid revelation having authority but it's something else. This is a strange incongruity indeed because these persons have churches and they have churches forgetting that the very word and the very thought and idea of having a church grows out of the New Testament and yet they do not believe the New Testament except the parts they want to and have no authority for existing as a church.

Now I want to ask you a question or two just think it over with me today. What about believing that the Bible is a book of moral myths? This is the kindly language that's used about our Bible by some that it is a pious fraud they say a pious fraud, a pious myth that it is useful just as a mother when she tells her child that if he doesn't be good a policeman will get him it has some validity and some usefulness though it is not sound and certainly is pragmatic it's not absolute.

Now there are those who believe that about the Bible that it is an inspiring book but it's not a fountain out of which all truth grows that it's a comforting book but it's not a criterion against which all truth can be judged that it's a helpful book but it is not a valid and final revelation from God and so each Sunday these people assemble to quote from a Bible which they hold is not trustworthy to pray to a God they read about in a book that they do not believe in the name of a Savior who said he was God and wasn't and who for that reason was either false or deceived and they seek to bring in the kingdom of heaven which they have heard about in a book they no longer believe and they bury their dead and in burying them quote the words I am the resurrection and the life spoken by a man

who is still dead or they quote at their burial of their dead let not your heart be troubled words spoken by a man whose heart was shortly thereafter broken I consider this infinite nonsense and I understand what Jesus meant when he said I would thou art hot or cold because thou art lukewarm and neither hot or cold I will spew thee out of my mouth and I believe that to join the legions of the damned and to march self-consciously and honestly in the legions of those who stand against God brings more respect among the white robed angels in heaven and the very God himself than to go to a church which is false and contribute to the delinquency of those who hold truths that are not so either what he said is true or it's not true if it is true we are under plenary obligation to believe it and

if we believe it we are instantly responsible to obey it and if it is not true then the whole concept of the church is false and if every time we enter a church and put a dollar in the basket we are contributing to the falsehood and helping to propagate error if Christ be not raised says the Holy Ghost if Christ be not risen then is your preaching vain and your faith is vain and we are found fault witnesses if Christ be not raised ye are yet in your sins and them that sleep in Christ are perished and if in this life only we have hope we are of all men most miserable there is no question about it salty old agnostic Henry Mencken said years ago that there is no question about it if the Bible is true the fundamentalists are right he wasn't a fundamentalist he said there was never anything

written by any fundamentalist that he liked except the colored poem on creation but he said nevertheless we'll all have to admit either the Bible is true or it isn't if it isn't then anybody can be right if it is then the

orthodox people are right those who hold that there is a fountain out of which truth proceeds and this is the fountain that there's a criterion against which all ideas can be measured and this is the criterion that there is a divine revelation having authority and finality and this is that revelation now that's what a great unbeliever said who was a salty, downright honest man though an unbeliever and I grant a man a right to be an unbeliever but I cannot find it in my heart I cannot find any wells of charity deep enough within me to enable me to respect a man who will

go to a church which is supposed to have been founded by Christ and at the same time not believe in the deity of the Christ who founded that church who follows slavishly along in a weakened and watered down tradition of a Bible which they do not hold to be the word of God I say again I would rather boldly lay my Bible down and walk out into the sunshine breathe deeply and say from here on I'm on my own than weakly to hang around an organization whose Christ is not Christ and whose God is not God and whose Bible is not valid and whose doctrines are not sound and whose faith is not true I say it's infinite nonsense and it ought to be known for what it is I've used a lot of ifs here you notice a lot of ifs if Christ be not praised then we're self-deceived and he was self-deceived and we are

fools indeed to seek comfort on the bosom of a psychopath a man who had visions and dreamed dreams but had no foundation under what he believed and what he dreamed but ah my brethren I thank God that I can say now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept for as by man came death by man also came the resurrection from the dead and Jesus Christ our Lord before he died said destroy this temple and in three days I will build it up again and three days passed and he raised it up again and they said of him God has made this same Jesus whom you've crucified Lord and Christ you and I are not looking for light we're not searching for truth but reverently and meekly we can say upon us has the light shined all the birds and bees and toads and bugs and frogs and

beasts and flowers and trees in the meadow yonder and in the forest and over the plain when the sun rises in the morning could if they had intelligence reverently say thank God the sun is risen but they would take no credit for the sun they would not beat their little chest and say I am better than thou for I have the sunlight they didn't bring the sun up they didn't create the sun it was not because they were good or worthy that the sun shone the sun shone because God made the sun to shine and so you and I can say I thank him reverently that the sun shines upon me this morning that the light of truth has reached my heart and I believe in the book and I believe in the Christ of the book and I believe in the gospel that flows out of the book and I believe in the reality of the faith of our

fathers and yet I do not proudly arch my chest and say I am better than thou I say just as the poor little toad there in the meadow or the rabbit in the briar patch might say thank God for the sunshine but I didn't give it thank God for the light but I didn't create it thank God that the sun shines on the meadow and on the pond this morning but I didn't make the sun nor the pond God made both what hast thou that thou hast not received when you begin to speak with dogmatism and I believe we Christians ought to be dogmatic when we begin to speak with dogmatism they shy away from us and say you're dogmatic you're sure of yourself you're holier than thou you're better than we how little they know the true Christian how little they know that in his heart he feels he's the worst of all men not

worthy to be a Christian indeed and that Jesus Christ has come out of mercy and grace and kindness alone and saved him and that he's earned nothing if he got his own desserts the best Christian in the world knows if he had his own desserts he'd be in hell this hour he knows it and he believes it so all the praise goes to the one who made the sun all the glory goes to the one who made the light not to the one

upon whom the light shines the light shines upon me but the glory of the light belongs to the one who made the light not upon the poor little one upon whom it has fallen and after he had risen from the dead Peter said God has made this same Jesus whom you've crucified both Lord and Christ and he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs and the Holy Spirit in

that book of Hebrews said that God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets hath in these last days spoken unto us in his Son whom he hath appointed heir of all things by whom also he made the worlds who upholding all things by the word of his power and when he had by himself purged our sins sat down at the right hand of God from whence he shall come the creed says to judge the quick and the dead being given a name says the Holy Ghost which is greater than angels and as he has inherited a more excellent name than they and the Father judgeth no man but he has given all judgment into the hands of his Son and again he said the words that I speak unto you they shall judge you in the last days people say I am confused there are so many

doctrines not by any doctrine preached by a mortal man will God judge his people or judge any people in the last day he will judge them according to what they have done with light received he will judge them according to what they have done with his words the words that I speak unto you the same shall judge you in the last day and then our Lord Jesus Christ laid this down on the line forever and forever and forever and said if any man will do my will he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God or whether I merely speak from myself so he threw faith back upon morals and made it a matter of conscience and a matter of penitence a matter of righteousness or sin whether we believe or not those who do not believe who say this is a comforting book but it's false in spots this is an

inspiring book but it's not true what nonsense that I am man made in the image of God capable of judging right or wrong that I should go to a comforter that can't comfort himself that I should seek immortality from a man who couldn't get out of his own grave that I should go for comfort to a man who was so badly mixed up he needed a psychiatrist who believed he was God and wasn't who believed he had come from God but was mistaken who was a victim of his times and a child of his age as our friends say no no my brother now is Christ risen from the dead and has become the first fruits of them that slept God has given into his hands all power in heaven and earth and under the earth and in the day to come they will crown him with all crowns in heaven above and on earth beneath and from the hot

caverns of hell they'll drag some kind of crown and offer it in bitterness and self-accusation to the man Christ Jesus who was born of the virgin to die upon his pilot and to rise again the third day no no my Christian friend you need not fear my Christian brother you need not worry about what the liberals say you need not worry about what the radicals or what the cults say this week I got a letter I think I still have it here I do Pastor Tozer Christian Missionary Alliance and that letter said thank you for your preaching over the radio I appreciate it so very much and I see that you're seeking something I am giving you some literature and I respectfully ask that you read this literature and see if this isn't what you want enclosed a five dollar check for your personal use that was from

a member of the Latter Day Saints I'm going to write the kindest letter that I am able to write and send back the check I don't want to be supported by false teachers and I am going to say I am not seeking anything only more of what I have I am not searching for anything only to know my God better that's all I don't want to know yours I am not seeking in a church or a false church that claims that Adam and Jesus Christ were gods I am not seeking for truth in a black confines of a coal mine but in the book of the Lord God not in the book of Mormon but in the book of light but I'm not going to be unkind this is a kind woman

meaning well but I don't want her money and I don't know why she should ever enjoy my preaching but anyway if any man will do my will he shall know of the doctrine let

me say to any self-appointed truth seekers who imagine themselves to be golden haired noble bright faced young people marching out into the world of thought looking for truth let me tell you you're deeply deceived and deluded you're doing nothing of the kind you're seeking to escape truth not to find it for truth is a hard master and truth will not impart itself to sinners truth will not give itself to rebels if any man is willing to know my will and to do my will he shall know and as soon as a man is ready to do God's will the light flashes in on him and his nose is converted and everything is right with his soul so my dear friends let us stop kidding ourselves let us stop worrying about the wisdom of the liberal the wisdom of the liberal is a compound of incongruity and nonsense too

awful too terrible to be understood by a mortal man either he's God or he's not God either this book is God's book or it's not God's book but for me timidly like a frightened mouse to crawl on the edge between belief and unbelief in the little twilight zone of uncertainty is impossible for my nature either I'm for him or I'm against him I'm on his side or I'm not I believe his book or I don't he did rise or he didn't if he didn't the whole thing's a hoax if he did the whole thing is a glorious sunburst of everlasting reality and I believe that he did so my dear friends take the book believe the word accept the truth may put Jesus Christ before your eyes and keep him in focus and as you obey him and believe him light will grow on you then you can seek truth seek it within the book but not

outside the book this is why I dare not add anything to the book I dare not come here quoting Plato I dare not come here though I've read all that stuff I still dare not come here teaching you that which was taught even by Epictetus or by Marcus Aurelius or by Hammurabi or any of the great Hammurabi or any of the great teachers not one of them do I dare teach this is the book this is the criterion this is the fountain this is the revelation and standing tall and white and glorious and beautiful up out of that book is a man a man destined to rule the world and to judge it and to hurl the unbelieving nations down like a broken vessel kiss the sun lest he be angry and you perish from the way when his anger is kindled but a little rush to the arms of Jesus surrender to his will and the light

will break and your doubts will disappear and you will know in whom you have believed Amen

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