

The Vital Office of Deacons

by Sam Caldwell

This sermon emphasizes the importance of the office of deacons in the church, highlighting the biblical qualifications and the significant role they play in serving the congregation. The sermon delves into Acts chapter 6, showcasing the inauguration of the office of deacons and the impact they had on the early church. It also explores the need for deacons to free up preachers, meet practical needs, and be men of integrity and spiritual maturity. The rewards of a deacon, including a good standing in heaven and great boldness in the faith, are also discussed, using Stephen as a powerful example of a faithful deacon.

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Description

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Transcript

So let me say this as we start this sermon. The title of this sermon is The Vital Office of Deacons. The Vital Office of the Church Deacons.

I don't know how much everybody in this room has studied what a deacon is, but that's what we're going to do today in this brief time we have together. And since we're missing a few families today, I want to encourage you all in the church that we're going to have to record this sermon and send it to all of them, and they're going to have to study at home, okay? Because this is a vital topic that everybody in our church has to study. Why? Because we're thinking at this point of appointing Dan as a deacon in the near future.

And I also want to preach this because other men in the church might want to rise up and become deacons. So are you all with me? We'll record the sermon and we'll send it to those who aren't here because they need to study it too. Everybody has to study this topic.

Amen? Amen. So again, The Vital Office of Deacons. What does that word vital mean? Vital comes from the Latin word vita, which means life.

And I'm basically saying today the church, for the church to have life, we need deacons. It's that serious. The Vital Office of Deacons.

And there are two texts we're going to look at today, Acts chapter 6, and then after that, we're going to turn to 1 Timothy and chapter 3, okay? Let's stay in Acts chapter 6 for right now. Let's read verses 1 through 7. Acts chapter 6, verses 1 through 7. And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Then the 12, that's the 12 apostles, called the multitude of the disciples unto them and said, it is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.

Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business, but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicholas, a proselyte of Antioch, whom they set before the apostles. And when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them, and watch this, and the word of God increased, and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Amen. Let me pray for us one more time. Let's pray.

Lord Jesus, this is so important. This is so vital, Lord. The office of the deacon in the church is so incredibly important, Lord, and I'm not worthy to preach on this.

So, Lord, I ask you that you would preach through me. I ask you, Lord, that you would get me out of the way, and I ask you, Lord, that you would give us today the whole counsel of God on this topic. Please wake each and every one of us up to have the energy and the clarity of mind to think about this topic for the next little while, Lord.

We need to know what your scriptures say. We need to not think like just any old church about deacons, but we need to think biblically about the deacons, Lord. Please teach us from your word.

Please teach us, oh God, from your mouth. Please give me your spirit right now, Lord. Please anoint this teaching.

Please anoint each and every one of us in this room to hear this teaching. We need you, Lord Jesus, and we pray in your name, and I thank you, Lord. Thank you for your blessing upon this meeting right now.

Amen. Amen. Okay, so the text we just read is actually the inauguration of the office of the deacons, and it's so important.

Can anybody tell me what happened in Acts chapter 2? What happens in Acts chapter 2 that's so important? Amen. Pentecost. The Holy Spirit comes down in flames of fire, and he invades his church, and he empowers his church to witness to this world.

And then what do we find just a few chapters later, right here, Acts chapter 6? We find that the church was multiplying so much that they needed help, right? They stopped everything and said, wait a second. We

need help here. We need basically some deacons.

We need some people who would help serve tables. So we're going to look at this today, the vital office of the deacon, and I want to challenge everyone in this room. Is there anyone who has ever thought of the deacon as just an afterthought? You know, you think church deacons, and you think, well, whatever.

What? I don't know. There might be some deacons, but what does it matter to me? Has anyone ever just thought, oh, there's a deacon board, and we don't really know what they do. Maybe they're like a board of trustees or something.

Maybe they pull the financial strings in the church, but we don't really know what they do. Maybe we've thought, oh, it's just a useless office, or maybe we think, well, there's their pastors and elders, but a deacon, it's just some lesser office. It doesn't matter.

If anyone has ever thought that, I want to give you one word that will change your perception of that completely, okay? Okay, everybody listening? One word that will tell you forever that the office of a deacon is so important. Everybody ready for that word? It's the word Stephen. Stephen.

Why am I saying that? Who's the first man appointed as a deacon in the entire history of the church? Verse five right here, Stephen. And who is Stephen? In the next chapter, he preaches one of the most amazing sermons. He knows he can go right through the whole Old Testament and explain it to these people.

And then, yes, he becomes the first martyr of the church. You don't want to think of Stephen as some little guy, you know? Stephen is right up there next to the Apostle Paul. He's right up there next to Martin Luther or David Wilkerson or whoever it is that you see as these great men of the faith.

This is Stephen. His name means crown. So you could almost call this sermon today the crowning office of the deacon.

The deacon is super important. And just imagine that. In chapter six, Stephen humbles himself to help serve dinner.

He's helping serve the lunches. And by the next chapter, he stands up in the full power of the Holy Spirit, and he preaches such a message that inflames people so much that they stone him to death. And he becomes the first martyr of the church.

And what was his office in the church? A deacon. So is there anybody here who still thinks our deacons aren't important? I hope not. I hope I'm trying to convince you just how important they are.

I've got some notes here. I want to try to get through all of them. I want this to be something of a teaching.

So you might just take notes or take down as much as you can here today. We're going to talk about the word deacon, the need for deacons, the qualifications of the deacon, and the rewards of a deacon. So these points might go by somewhat quickly, but this is very, very important.

So please follow me. Here we are, Acts chapter six. First, the word deacon.

We're just going to define our terms here. The word deacon comes from diakonos, which is the ordinary Greek word for servant. Think about this.

In Romans chapter 15, verse eight, Christ is called a deacon. But Christ isn't a deacon in the church, right? It means he is a servant. In Romans chapter 13, verse four, the government is called a deacon.

But what does that mean? It means that the government is a servant in the hands of God. In Romans 16, verse one, Phoebe is called a deacon. But what does that mean? It means that she is a servant in the house of God.

The office inaugurated right here in Acts chapter six is the office of deacon, and it means one who serves tables. Look in chapter six, verse two. They say, it's not reason, it's not proper for us to leave the word of God and serve tables.

But they're looking for a group of men who would, what? Serve tables. So that's where we get that word, the first appearance. In Greek, it's literally diakonein trapeze dies, which means to be a servant at the table.

So that's the meaning of this word. Consider this. In the Bible, there are two church offices, elder and deacon.

The elders and the deacons are mentioned together in many passages. One would be 1 Timothy chapter three, Philippians chapter one, verse one. You see Paul addresses that church and says to the elders and the deacons.

So those are the main offices and the only offices that we need in the church of God. Elders and deacons have distinct functions, but they serve the church together. That's so important.

They do separate things, but they're serving together at all times. And if you want a simple thing to remember about the difference between elder and deacon, it would be this. Look at verse four in the text right in front of you.

Verse four says we need to give ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word. That's literally to serving the word, right? So these apostles are going to spend time in prayer and then they're going to serve up the word almost like in good little portions, right? They're going to cut up the word and say, this is how much I can serve to you this week, right? Congregation. They're going to serve it up and give it to the people.

So the apostles and what will become the elders, they're serving the word. And the deacons, verse two, serve tables. Everybody see that? That's the distinction.

Elders are going to serve the word. Deacons are going to serve tables. And that's all the church needs to get this thing functioning and powerful in the earth.

Isn't that amazing? So this is how I would define the deacon. It's the official church office of men who focus on the practical needs of the church. Men who focus on the practical needs of the church.

That's what's being laid out here. And you all notice, I didn't say men who focus on the physical needs of the church. I think we want to define it, the practical needs of the church.

We don't want to say, okay, the pastor is going to deal with the spiritual things and the deacons will deal with the physical things. No, it's rather that deacons are called to deal with practical things. But who did I say was the first deacon? Anybody remember? Amen.

And is he only dealing with physical things? No, he's dealing with practical stuff. He's serving the tables. But right in the next chapter, he stands up and he preaches, which means that a deacon could stand up and preach.

A deacon can do huge and massive things in the kingdom of God, spiritual things. Also, when we serve tables, that's not just a physical thing, is it? It has spiritual implications, right? When we come here today and we're going to make a little sandwich and we're going to exchange some words with each other, that has eternal ramifications. Amen? No little thing.

Okay, so that's the word deacon. We're going quick here. Everybody following me? Secondly, the need for deacons.

Why in the world do we need deacons in the church of God? Three little things that we see here. First, look at verse two in front of us. We need deacons to help free up the preachers.

Okay? We need deacons to help free up the preachers. Look at verse two. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them and said, it is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.

They're saying, we need to focus on the word of God. Can someone else please come and help serve the tables? Right? So we just want to see that first. In Pastor Don's church, if he's going to focus on the word of God, he needs other people to come in and free him up.

Okay? Secondly, why do we need deacons? We need deacons to help meet the practical needs of the congregation. Let's just see some of the words that the scripture uses to talk about those practical needs. Verse one, it says, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews.

Look at that. So people were fighting in the church. And then look what it says, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.

Why do we need deacons? We don't want anybody to be neglected. Amen. So we're needing to meet the practical needs of the congregation.

If we, even in our small church, we look out and we say, okay, they're being neglected. Has anyone called him this week? Has anyone called her this week? How are they doing? Do they have enough money? Right? Do they have enough food? The deacons are called to notice a neglect and say, okay, we're going to take care of that. Just notice a few more words we've looked at in verse two, serving tables.

So the deacons would help with practical serving. And one more word in verse three, it says, look ye out among you. Oh, that's important.

Should we go hire a deacon from Tennessee? Should we hire a deacon from Canada and get him to fly over here? No, we should look out among us right here. And we should say, is there anyone here? And then what do they say? Seven men of honest report. We're looking for someone honest, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom.

And then it says, whom we may appoint over this business. That's just one more word. I want you to all sort of circle in your minds, this business.

We've said when people are neglected in the church, we need deacons. When we need to serve tables, we need deacons. And then when there's a business, right? We might say, all of a sudden we've got this street ministry and we need some tracks.

Is there a deacon who would take up this business, who would delegate to people how we're going to get those tracks out there? Amen. So we're talking about the need for deacons now. One more.

This is the third reason we need deacons. We need men that we can count on physically and spiritually. Look again at verse three right here in front of us.

It says, look out among you, seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom. Isn't that convicting? Can we look in our churches and say, there's an honest person full of the Holy Ghost and full of wisdom. I can count on that person.

And look at verse five too. There's a little bit more in verse five. The saying pleased the whole multitude.

And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. I'm saying that one final reason we need deacons is that we need men we can count on physically and spiritually. Imagine this, a new convert walks through that door and that new convert is dealing with some new problems, right? Maybe they're saying, I still drink.

I'm still dealing with a pornography problem and they come in. We need to be able to say, okay, we've got some people here that you can count on. We've got some people here and I could, I could send you to that man or to that woman or to that man.

You see, and when you talk to that person, you're going to be talking to someone you can count on spiritually. That's the need for deacons. Amen.

Let me repeat those three points one more time. We need deacons to help free up the elders, to help meet the practical needs of the congregation and so that we have men we can count on. Everybody with me? Praise God.

That's so vitally important. How could the church even exist without those things? We need it so badly. Now let's turn to first Timothy and chapter three.

First Timothy chapter three. You found it? Excellent. Thank you so much, sister.

We've got the page number there. Okay. First Timothy three and verse eight is what we're going to look at.

We've talked about the word what it means. We've talked about the need for deacons. And our third point is the qualifications of a deacon.

And again, this is so important. This is what we have to send to everybody else in the church for them to think about. If we're going to appoint someone as a deacon, they have to meet these qualifications.

And I'll add this. They have to actively meet these qualifications. What I mean by that is you can't just meet these qualifications on one day and then serve as a deacon and two weeks later you're not meeting them.

Or three years later, you don't meet these qualifications. I want you to all think of these as active qualifications. You have to be living this out every day of your life if you're a deacon.

Okay. Let's look at First Timothy chapter three and verse eight. This is where we get the qualifications for the deacon.

It says, likewise, must the deacons be grave. I'm going to give you 10 qualifications. So follow me here.

First, reverent. That's the first qualification. In Greek, the word is *semnus*.

It means reverent, grave, godly, or serious. I like that word serious. And this is both horizontal and vertical.

If someone is *semnus*, is grave, it means that they are respectful of people around them. Right. And it also means they're fearful of God.

So if we're looking to appoint a deacon, we should be able to look at that man and say, yeah, he's reverent. He's respectful. He respects others.

And he trembles at God. We're going to go quickly through these. So follow me.

Second, the deacon must be honest. It says, likewise, deacons must be grave, not double-tongued. What a beautiful word.

In the It's literally double-tongued. It means something like you're not speaking in different ways. You're not divided in your speech.

Or you could put it this way, not speaking out of both sides of his mouth. Okay. So if you've got a deacon, he's not going to be in the deacon's meeting saying one thing.

And then he comes to the church and says a different thing. Or a deacon's not going to say one thing in the church and then go out in his family and say a different thing. Or go out on the streets and say something else.

Right. It's such a beautiful Greek word. It's *me di logos*, not *di logos*, which literally means not having two ways of speaking, not having two tongues.

So if you see a dishonest, hypocritical, double-tongued person, that's not a deacon. Amen. Thirdly, self-controlled when it comes to alcohol.

Look at this verse. They must be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine. That literally is not indulging in much wine.

And you might notice if you look back at verse three, that the elders in verse three are supposed to be abstinent. Look at verse three. It says elders are not given to wine.

Literally in the Greek, elders are not near wine. And I'm just not going to hold back on this. I believe this from the bottom of my heart, that if a qualified elder should not touch wine, by that I mean not touch alcohol, not touch whiskey, not touch beer.

Because in verse three, it says the elders are, again, not near wine. They don't even come close to it. But in verse eight, I think it means that the deacons are very self-controlled with wine or with anything alcoholic.

Okay. So we've got the elders who are abstinent and the deacons are not given to much wine. I simply believe that that means they can control themselves, truly control themselves.

They're never getting drunk. They're not even going close to that. Amen.

That's our third qualification. I hope this is truly interesting to all of you because some of us might say, I'll never be a deacon. Okay.

But you want good deacons in your church, right? So I hope this is really exciting for you. It's exciting for me. Fourth qualification, the deacon cannot be greedy.

Look at our text here. End of verse eight, it says, not greedy of filthy lucre. Literally, it means that the deacon doesn't do shameful things with money.

If you like, the most literal translation would be, not money shameful, something like that. Okay. So if we're looking to appoint a deacon, we don't want someone who does underhanded things with money, right? We don't want someone who's always trying to make a buck in the wrong way over here or trying to lie about money over here.

The deacon is not shameful in his dealings with money. Let's move on. Fifth qualification in verse nine, I would say that a deacon is a vessel for the truth.

Look at verse nine, holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience or with a pure conscience. Isn't that beautiful? Consider the deacon to be like a beautiful vessel. Do we have a good, like that basket or something that can hold the mystery of the faith, right? It holds it without that faith, just dribbling off the sides, holding the mystery with a pure conscience.

Everybody think of Stephen again. He's appointed in chapter six. In the very next chapter, he can help people.

He can get up and preach. He's, he's not going to back down on his faith, right? When the authorities come, when Paul comes and he's breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the church of God and against Stephen, does Stephen say, okay, I'll go hide at home. You know what? I don't actually believe in Christ.

Does he do that? No, he doesn't back down. He dies getting stoned while preaching. And he looks up into heaven and sees Christ standing at the right hand of God.

What's that? That's Stephen holding this mystery of the faith with a clean conscience. Isn't that beautiful? The deacon must be able to do that. This also tells us that the deacon could preach, okay? So there's no place in scripture that says that a man who is a deacon can never preach.

The deacon could get up and preach. The deacon could street preach. The deacon could help in teaching.

And I want to read to you something that I wrote about having a pure conscience or a clean conscience. Please think through this with me. So I'm talking about chapter three in verse nine, holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

What does that mean? This possession of the truth involves maintenance of a pure conscience. While every Christian is called to keep a pure conscience, the elders and deacons are particularly beholden to

this duty. Ministers who possess truth but not with a clean conscience are quickly impaired and rendered useless.

Y'all follow me on that? Why would that be? If I preached to you, Christianity is a religion of forgiveness. If you follow Jesus, you must forgive. But then you all hear that I go home and I'm not forgiving people.

I'm not forgiving my relatives. I'm not forgiving my co-workers. Would you all follow me? No.

Why? Because I'm a hypocrite, right? Because I'm not walking with a clean conscience. The deacon and the elder must have a very clean conscience. And let me see, ministering with a clear conscience is one of the most valuable gifts elders and deacons can give to the church.

A pure conscience must be actively kept up through prayer, Bible reading, confession, fellowship, and honest accountability with other Christians or fellow elders and deacons. So am I saying that a deacon has to be perfect? No. The scripture is saying though that the deacons should be able to hold the truths of this faith with a pure conscience.

And again, I want to impress upon you all, this is the most beautiful thing that a deacon could give to the church. That people can go to that deacon and say, wow, he's not a hypocrite. Wow, he tells us that we have to evangelize and he's evangelizing, right? He's got a clean conscience.

He tells us that Christians can be free from pornography and he's free from pornography. That's the sort of deacon we need. That's the sort of elders we need in the church of God.

Amen? Okay, that was the fifth qualification. Here we go. Let's keep going.

Verse 10, sixth qualification is that the deacon must be tested and blameless. It says right here, and let these also first be proved, then let them use the office of a deacon being found blameless. Tested and blameless.

What this means really is that the deacon must be assessed or looked at from all sides. And I told you all at the start of this sermon that we're considering making Dan a deacon. What we're going to do now after this sermon is to basically go into a testing period where everybody in the church is able to look and say, would you approve, right? And I believe people will say, yes, they approve.

But let me read what I wrote down here. This doesn't mean that the man is perfect, but it does mean that there is no glaring deficiency of character that would hinder a man's ministry or his ability to be considered helpful by a congregation. Tested and blameless.

Looked at or assessed from all sides. Okay, seventh qualification. Let's keep going.

Verse 11, even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Praise God. If a deacon is married, the deacon's wife must meet certain character qualifications in verse 11.

And consider this, that this also applies to elders' wives. So if we want to appoint anyone as an elder or a deacon, we ought to look at verse 11 and say, is his wife meeting these qualifications? I praise God for a wife who is grave. She's not a slanderer.

She's sober and she's faithful in all things. And that actually speaks to the qualification of the deacon or the elder. Amen.

It's a beautiful thing. Eighth qualification. Let's keep going.

The eighth qualification is in verse 12. It says, let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. Now wait, let me pause here and let's all notice something as we read this text.

Before verse 10 there, he was talking about deacons, right? Note that in verse 11, he shifts and talks about the deacon's wives, right? And then note that in verse 12, he goes back to talking about deacons. See, it says, let the deacons be the husbands of one wife. That right there proves that deacons in the church of God are only male.

And I just wanted us to cover this. This is very important because there are debates about this. People will say there are deaconesses and deacons, but right here, what you see Paul doing is he's describing the qualifications of male deacons.

In verse 11, he turns to talk about their wives, and then he goes back in verse 12 to talking about deacons. I hope that helps you to see clearly that the deacons are only male. And then he talks about their wives, okay? Just really good to think that through.

Verse 12, let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. Our eighth qualification for a deacon is this. They need marital fidelity and holiness.

Excuse me. We'll just talk about marital fidelity in this eighth qualification. Let me read what I wrote here because I want to be very, very precise.

If a deacon is married, the deacon must be faithful to his wife. He must not be a polygamist. What does polygamist mean? Having more than one wife.

And that's probably one of the main reasons that Paul has verse 12 right here. Because in his day, the Greek there is literally standing by his children and his own house. Standing by or standing over the children in the house.

This simply means that the man is doing well at home before he's doing well in the church of God. And I just want to really impress this upon us. One's ability to rule in his own house comes before the ability to take care of the church of God.

Amen? If a deacon or an elder is messing things up at home, he then becomes disqualified and can't be helpful in the church of God. That was the ninth qualification. Management of children in house.

And here is the 10th and final qualification. Serving well. Look at verse 13.

It says, they that have used the office of the deacon well. Just think of that phrase with me as we come to conclude. They that have used the office of a deacon well.

This means that a deacon has to have an active service. The deacon has to perform his calling. He has to take up this office and he has to do it well.

Like I said at the start, this means that the deacon has an ongoing qualification, right? A deacon must remain actively qualified while serving. Also, if a deacon fails to meet these qualifications while serving, it is most noble for him to bow out of the position for a time. That's really important to think about, isn't it?

Think about me as an elder in this church.

If all of a sudden I can't manage my home and my marriage is falling apart and I can't train my little boy in the right way at home, what would be best for me to do? Should I just let that sore fester and let it start to stink for a while? No. If there's truly a problem that I can't confess and repent of and make good before God and before the other people in this congregation, I should nobly back down and back out of the position. Amen? And you know what one of the reasons is that our churches can become so messed up? It's that out of pride, people would never do that.

People would never of their own account say, you know, how am I doing? Talk to the other brothers and the sisters in the church and say, am I actually meeting these? I mean, that was almost tiring, was it not, to go through the 10 qualifications right there? That's major when you go through those. The deacon has to be willing every day of his life to test himself by that grid right there. Okay, so let me say that one more time.

Those are ongoing qualifications. It's not that you ordain a man one day and he's got it together. It's that he actually lives that reality.

Amen? What have we talked about? The word deacon, the need for deacons, the qualifications of a deacon. This is the whole counsel of God, right? Finally, the rewards of a deacon. And we'll end with this point.

Look at verse 13 right in front of you. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchased to themselves a good degree or a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus. Now, often we don't think of rewards, do we? We say, oh, I'm just too humble for that.

I'm not thinking of my place in heaven. I'm not thinking of what Christ might give me when I get there. I want to encourage each one of you.

If you're a Christian, think of your heavenly rewards. I think of that little white stone in Revelation. I've told you all this many times.

When I get to heaven, I want to get that stone, whatever that is. You know, Christ offers that little white polished stone with a new name written on it. That's what I want.

I don't even know what it is, but that's what I want. Do you all have those heavenly rewards in mind, or are you only thinking about this life and this plane here? We got to think about glory. We have to think about the rewards and glory.

What does a deacon get? Don't tell me, no, no, no, the deacon doesn't think about heaven. The deacon is only caring about, you know, brothers and sisters right here, right now. No, the deacon should think about his heavenly reward, and it's right here in verse 13.

They purchase to themselves a good degree. That's the reward in heaven, a good degree. You all say, what is that? What's a good degree? It means a good standing.

Did you know that in heaven, there are going to be degrees? There are going to be standings. There are going to be some who are closer to the throne and some who are not. There are going to be some who just make it into heaven as by fire, and there are going to be others who were sanctified in this life and had

a good get a good standing in heaven.

You got to think about this. The deacon who serves well as a deacon receives in heaven a good standing. That means judgment day.

That means heavenly rewards that will last you for all of eternity. That really matters. Amen? And then the second thing, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

I want that. I'd like, maybe I should stop being an elder and be a deacon. I want that great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Do you all want that? That's talking about here and now. We don't need boldness once we're in heaven. We need boldness here and now.

So think of what the deacon gets. Good standing in heaven and a great boldness here and now. That would mean an evangelism, an assurance of faith, and boldness at the throne of grace in prayer.

Now as we conclude, just think about Stephen for one more second. Please don't go away from this sermon saying, I'm bored with deacons. I don't care about deacons.

There's a deacon board somewhere that maybe is the board of trustees and they own the church. No. I hope I've proven to you that deacons truly matter for eternity.

What was Stephen's good standing? Well, we see a little bit of it. It's that he could preach and he could be stoned to death and he goes on preaching. And then what does he do? He has a face like an angel and he looks up into heaven and he sees the risen son of God and he sees Christ.

And is Christ seated at the hand of the Father? No. For some reason, and I can't tell you why, Christ is standing at the right hand of the Father. Christ stands up to receive Stephen.

Stephen, the first deacon, has such a good standing, such a good degree in heaven, that Christ stands to receive him. Hallelujah. Isn't that amazing? And then think of his boldness.

It's when Paul and all these other hypocritical Pharisees are literally chucking stones at him and crushing his bones. He can stand there and preach through the whole Old Testament and tell them that they are stiff-necked. That's what in Greek is called parousia.

It's boldness. Boldness before God and before man. I want that.

I hope you all want that. And I hope you all want men in your church who want that. The vital office of the deacon.

The crowned office of the deacon. Please pray for that in this church. If we're going to grow, if we're going to honor God truly, we need deacons.

Let's pray. I thank you, Lord Jesus. Thank you for your perfect word.

Thank you for teaching us out of your word, Lord. Thank you for this beautiful list of qualifications. And we ask, Lord, that as deacons are formed and appointed in our church, that they would be according to your word.

That they would be true to your word, Lord. That they would be men full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, just like Stephen. Lord, we need that so desperately in this day and age.

Thank you, Lord, for honoring the preaching of your word by your spirit. In Christ's name, amen.

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