

I. The Mission

A. V5 - "put what remained into order and appoint elders in every town as I directed you"

B. What was out of order?

1. The people of Crete were (10-16):

- a) Insubordinate: one who does not submit to authority, mutinous - In the setting of our text, that would mean the authority of the apostles of Christ in whose teachings the early church continued steadfastly

Acts 2:42 :And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."

- b) Empty talkers
c) Deceivers
d) Members of the circumcision party

Acts 15:1 "But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."

- e) Upsetting whole families
f) Teaching what they ought not for shameful
g) Liars
h) Evil Beasts
i) Lazy Gluttons
j) Devoted to Jewish Myths
k) Turned away from the truth
l) Defiled and Unbelieving
m) Profess to know God but deny Him by their works
n) Detestable

Prov 6:16–19 "There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers."

- o) Disobedient - unwilling to be persuaded and obey
p) Unfit for any good work!

Eph 2:10 "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

2. What needed to be done? They must be silenced (11) and rebuked (13)
3. Who is going to do this? Elders!

II. The Plan: Appoint Elders

A. Church Organization: The Lord was very clear in His Word about how He wishes His church on earth to be organized and managed.

1. Christ is the head of the church and its supreme authority

Eph 1:22 “And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church,”;

Col 1:18 “And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.”

2. The church is to be governed by spiritual leadership consisting of two main offices—elders and deacons. (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3).

B. Elder: The terms “overseer” and “elder” are used interchangeably.

1. Multiple elders. (Acts 14:23, Acts 15:5, 6, 22, Ja 5:14)

2. The primary role of the elders is to care for the flock through faithful teaching

a) “give instruction in sound doctrine”

b) and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

C. Elder Qualifications:

1. Ability to teach

a) The Word

(1) The only source of absolute truth is God and His Word

(2) You can build your life on what the “world says” or what the “Word says.”

2 Pet 1:20 “knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation.”

(3) Build it on that which doesn’t change. The Bible is from God, the God who never lies.

(4) At least 80 times Jesus says, “I tell you the truth.”

b) Sound doctrine

(1) Your beliefs determine behavior. - Verse 1, “Truth that accords with godliness” or “truth that “leads” to godliness.

(2) You will build your life on something, don’t build it on a myth.

(3) Untrue beliefs are the cause for many of the world’s problems, but also they’re the cause of many of “my problems.”

2. The elders must be above reproach in character and conduct.

a) Above reproach does not mean sinless,

- (1) No Christian lives an entirely sinless life, nor will we until we reach the glorified state in heaven. Above reproach means that the overseer's life is free from sinful habits or behaviors that would impede his setting the highest Christian standard and model for the church to emulate (Heb 13:7; 1 Pet 5:3).
- (2) The overseer must not give cause for those outside the church to impugn its reputation. Being above reproach means that no one can honestly bring a charge or accusation against him.

1 Pet 3:16 “having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.”

b) Blameless in Relationships

- (1) Marriage - *Husband of one wife* – literally a "one-woman man."
- (2) Parenting - “children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination.”
 - (a) Timothy adds, “he must keep his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how can he care for God’ s church?” (Tim 3:4-5)
 - (b) But what about “children are believers”? Believer in this passage can be understood as “faithful”

c) Blameless in Conduct

- (1) Five Negatives
 - (a) Not Arrogant.
 - (b) Not Quick Tempered
 - (c) Not a Drunkard
 - (d) Not Violent.
 - (e) Not Greedy
- (2) Six Positive Qualifications
 - (a) Hospitable
 - (b) A lover of good
 - (c) Self-Controlled
 - (d) Upright
 - (e) Holy
 - (f) Disciplined

III. The mission for the rest of us

Acts 20:28-32 “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which He obtained with His own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease day or night to admonish everyone with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up.”

1 John 2:4–6 “Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, [5] but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: [6] whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.”

How can anyone be qualified? We must look to Christ.

We must place our faith in Christ, in his perfect work, and be counted blameless positionally, and then through Christ, experience these graces practically.

Eph 5:1 “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”

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