

****READ THE TEXT****

INTRO-

Introductory Illustration

- **The Great Wall of China** is over 1,500 miles long. It ranges in height from 15 to 30 feet. It was started 2,400 years ago and, Yet, three times it was breached by people who bribed the guards -- bribed them, lured them -- to let the enemy walk through the gates. **Well!** -- The government invested a great deal of money and manpower to protect the nation by means of a high wall, but they didn't invest in the moral character of the guardian leaders.
- The guards could be easily bribed with money, which made the wall worthless! **The point? In the work: character is everything!** SO> In the Lord's work, character is everything.
- Remember where we are: we're in **Crete** - a large island in the Mediterranean.
 - It's a place of travel, lots of Mediterranean traffic. No doubt a wine industry here was famous - and flourishing. Drunkenness was epidemic. We've learned that the Cretans were known for deception/lying all over the world (their reputation). Indeed, their sexually driven/lust-gratifying religion would be the interest of many.
 - >> BUT THE GOSPEL TOOK HOLD & CHURCHES WERE BIRTHED & now leaders are urgently needed! Godly pastors, shepherds, overseers!
 - SHEEP would die for lack of a shepherd, so the flock of God will not thrive and mature without faithful shepherds.
 - Just as a home would suffer greatly without godly, humble, servant, courageous male leadership, so it is in the family of God — it will suffer without godly, humble, servant courageous male leadership.
- *When we come to talk about “leadership -- eldership” a few intro remarks:*
 - 1. **it is essential**
 - 2. **it is a plurality**
 - 3. **it is for men**
 - 4. **it is exemplary (to be followed)**
 - 5. **it is noble (it's a noble, good, busy, God-Blessed work!)**
- Men must LEAD, they must TEACH, they must SHEPHERD, they must PROTECT, they must EXEMPLIFY, they must WARN, they must GUIDE, they must MODEL, they must PRAY, they must PREACH. > but before Paul gets to the *ministerial duties* of the leader, he wants to clarify the *heart qualities* of the leader. **Let's emphasize this!**
 - **And hear this** --> that God gives us more clear, specific, unambiguous directions about the **CHARACTER** of the man who is an elder more than any other aspect of eldership (including preaching/teaching/counseling/administrating, etc.).
 - **Focus on the internals** (more than externals, the private more than public, the humility of the man more than the administrative/organizational skills of the man).
 - the man's character is CRITICAL. The man's heart is the target.

Background to Titus 1.5ff

- Paul begins the book of Titus by getting right to point. **Leadership!** The NT speaks of leaders in many places (and even qualifications: 1 Tim 3:1-7 & 1 Pet 5:1-5 & Titus 1:5-9). We see others in Matt 20:28ff; Acts 20:20-28; Ex 18:18-23; 2 Tim 2:23-25!
 - In 1:5 - Paul gives the historical purpose (5); then he gives the summary charge to appoint elders above reproach (6a); and then vv.6-9 Paul spells out what that means (6-9). **Priority business is dealt with first. Get fit & holy & qualified men in leadership.** He'll list 5 vices (negatives) and then 7 virtues (6 essential character qualities & 1 ministerial requirement) [And: these should mark **all* the children of God -- esp church leaders!*]
- So we come to v.5 - a **few simple observations of v.5:**
 1. the need for godly leadership for church things to be in order
 2. the appointing of church leaders by church leaders -- appoint elders was Titus' work > a leader appointing elders. Note: Paul told TITUS to appoint elders. (not a vote, not majority opinion, not biggest giver, long-time member, prominent community man).
 3. the plurality of men serving as elders (=plural)
 4. those who serve as elders must be men (v.6a)
 5. the apostolic directive to ensure godly, biblical church leadership (v.5b - as i directed you)
 6. the understanding that every church leader is a steward of God (v.7a)

THESIS — From Titus 1:5-9 we will learn *God's* BLUEPRINT *for biblical church leadership.*

He must be — ABOVE REPROACH — a man OF GOD in 3 primary realms:

- 1.domestic piety (in the home) (6) [home]
- 2.honorable character (7-8) [in the heart]
- 3.theological fidelity (9) [in the Word]

NOTE what a man is to BE (v.5-8) comes before what a man is TO DO (v.9)

• **Define “Above Reproach” (6a)**

- A. If any man is ἀνέγκλητος,- ESV: above reproach; NIV: ‘blameless’; one translation: “Free from all charge against him”** [same word referring to your position that Christ presents you *blameless* and beyond reproach; Col 1.22]
- B. Other writers have put it like this: men of unquestioned integrity" (Phillips); or, A spiritual leader must have a good reputation" (GWT); or, each of them must be a man of irreproachable character" (NJB)
 1. This is not about NOT a sinlessness, but a pattern; it's not perfection but a progression.
 2. a man without any glaring omission, addiction, perversion or wrongdoing. This guy has no baggage.
 3. There are many who have a stigma that Christians are *hypocrites*. This first overarching, umbrella, all-encompassing trait is **necessary** -- he must be HOLY in his HOME life, his HEART and in his LIFE. He must live what he preaches. He can't preach one thing with his lips and unpreach what he says with his life.

4. The story is told of a *skeptical agnostic* - who was so in despair he was going to commit suicide. He said: if I can find a minister who is really 'for real' and who lived out his faith, I'd at least sit and listen and hear him out. He hired a private detective for a preacher & after a time the report came back that this man was a holy man, with a humble heart whose life was irreproachable, he was blameless, above reproach. The skeptic went to the church that Sunday, heard the gospel, repented & came to faith!
- C. This is the guy who is unaccused; he has an untarnished reputation; unblemished reputation; has nothing in his life that someone could point to & accuse him. He has unimpeachable character.
1. A man of irreproachable integrity - Job 1.1; Ps 26:1, 11; Rev 14.5; Phil 2.15; Ps 101; Prov 2.7; 10.9; Ps 119:80.
 - a) This is possible thru the gospel - Col 1.22; 1 Cor 1.8 > *so live out who you are!* God made you *blameless*, so live *blamelessly*. Be who you are! Be HOLY!
 2. In his heart, in his motives, in his speech, in his relationships, in his community, in his home, with his wife, on his trips, with his computer, with his iPhone, when he's alone or in public >> *he is a blameless/above reproach man.*

I. DOMESTIC PIETY (in the home)

- "The home is the training ground for Christian leadership".
- Purity in the home in *2 primary ways*:
 - A. Marriage (sexual purity)
 - B. Family (managing his household)

II. HONORABLE CHARACTER

- A. Note the emphasis on the *unseen heart* than on the *visible giftedness*!
- B. Here Paul will give 5 vices and 6 virtues (and then 1 ministerial quality, v.9)

III. THEOLOGICAL FIDELITY (9)

- A. It's ONE ministerial qualification & *essential!*
- B. Hold on to the Word (cling/superglue/tie in a knot) himself to the Word
 1. To EXHORT in sound doctrine
 2. To REFUTE those who contradict

SO, here are some Applications —

1. Pray for your elders to maintain holy hearts & lives
2. Honor the noble & God-given office of eldership
3. Strive for these characteristics in your life [all believers]
4. Submit to your elders with joy
5. strive to make their work a blessing and not a burden by receiving the Word & implementing the Word in your life.
6. Encourage your shepherd elders specifically (and their wives and children)
7. Exhort young men to strive for godliness & to consider eldership as a goal
8. Observe other men who demonstrate godly character & humbly mention them to your elders for consideration.
9. Praise & thank God for godly men that He has given to lead His church!

CONCL-

Concluding Illustration

- I would conclude with the words of Samuel as a ***loving exhortation*** to you -- dear church family to please pray for us! Like the words of Samuel: “Far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you...”