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Titus - Making Things Right

(v.5)

We're in the book of Titus. Titus is about setting things in order. How do we know that? Well, he states it in the beginning of the book and Paul writes to Titus and says, "This is the reason I left you in Crete. It was for this very purpose." We see that in Titus 1:5; which we will be talking about specifically tonight. Why this letter? What is going on? How do you set things in order? The fact is that this is a pastoral epistle. That is to say that Paul is writing to a pastor and that is Titus within the context. Just like 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy are pastoral epistles, Philemon is a pastoral epistle addressed to a pastor. So, we don't see him at large dealing with the church. Although, we see him dealing with the pastor of the church. In some ways when you think about Revelation in chapters 2 and 3, where Christ begins to deal with the seven churches of Asia Minor; it is much like that because Jesus will say, "You have these issues. I have this against you." You see Him saying this to two of the seven, and five of them are really more of an encouragement; but they're kind of letters to the angel of the church of Ephesus. The angel of the church means the messenger of the church; which is making reference to the one who is over the church. So, in some ways, that's what the pastoral epistle is doing.

It's clear in the book of Titus that you're dealing with a pretty intense issue. That is to say, things are chaotic in Crete. As we were talking about the fact that you almost have a Judges situation; in which the theme of the book of Judges is "every man did what was right in his own eyes". So, they were very syncretistic; all kinds of beliefs and faiths. "Whatever you believe, we'll just blend it in and come up with our own philosophy." It's kind of the way the world thinks today. I've been almost shocked just within a short time in my life. I've seen people going from "What denomination do you belong to?"; which I've never put much stake in that in the sense that we're all followers of Christ. So, there really aren't any denominations in heaven, but it was at least an established faith rather than "Well, I think this..." or "I believe this". You're seeing everybody do whatever they feel like doing. That really is the prophecy of 2 Timothy 3, which talks about the fact that in the last days perilous times will come and men will be lovers of self. If you're lovers of self, then whose opinion are you going to value? Yours because you're lovers of self. So, you're not really interested in anybody else. To me, it's bizarre because for somebody to actually think that they control the universe. It's just a strange thought to me.

As we come to the book of Titus, Paul begins to establish the foundation; because once again, this letter is for the purpose of bringing things back into some kind of order. We have the influence of the Jews, Greeks, obviously mythology, philosophy and all kinds of mysticism that comes into these islands; as well as the port cities like Ephesus and Crete; which was probably

about 200 miles south of Ephesus. We see the description of this island that's mentioned in Titus 1.

In Titus 1:10, he begins to say, "For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision..."; that is to say, Jews. So, they've infiltrated as well.

(Titus 1:11) "...who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain."

Obviously, money has become an issue.

(Titus 1:12) "One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, 'Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.'

(Titus 1:13) This testimony is true..."

Paul does not deny the reality of that, which is an interesting testimony as well. How do you bring things back into order? How do you make things the way they need to be? How do you turn the things that are upside down right side up? In many respects, that's what this book is about as well as how you do that in the church.

I've been to a lot of different churches throughout the years and seen a lot of issues and problems. It is strange how people will oftentimes vie for positions in a church, and I'm thinking, "It's a church." How men will fight for those positions and a lot of divisions and strife over some of the strangest things is just really bizarre. But how wonderful it is when things are done right. I've seen the difference and I've realized in all of the churches that did things right, they did one thing continually the same and that was they made sure that the leadership was right. That's what we're going to see in the book of Titus because you start at the top. You don't start at the bottom and work your way up. Paul will talk about the fact that we have a foundation which is Jesus Christ. We build upon the prophets and apostles and then from there we have pastors, teachers and evangelists. This is the foundation of the building. You'll see that as well in Ephesians 4 where he specifically is dealing with that foundation.

(Ephesians 4:11) "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,

(Ephesians 4:12) for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ"

Now, if you go back into 1 Corinthians 3, he's dealing with Corinthians. Here again, it's pretty interesting because we know that we're dealing with infantile behavior with the church of Corinth and people were trying to have some sort of position, "I'm of Apollos", "I'm of Paul" and "I'm of Cephas". Then he goes, "Come on, we're all of Christ."

(1 Corinthians 3:10) “According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it.

(1 Corinthians 3:11) For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

(1 Corinthians 3:12) Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

(1 Corinthians 3:13) each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work.”

There’s going to be testing of genuineness. It’s going to happen but that’s a good thing because you don’t want things being built on faulty foundations. So, God is gracious to bring in trials and tribulations. People will say, “A church shouldn’t have any problems.” Well, God weeds out, but once again the wonderful thing is that when the church is done right, Christ continues to be lifted up. The focus is always on Him; “keeping our eyes on Him, the author and perfecter of faith.” (Hebrews 12:2)

The leadership is and should always be ordained. That’s a very interesting point as we look at Titus because it’s clear within the passage that Paul has appointed Titus to oversee this. Then, it’s now Titus’ responsibility to appoint men who will oversee that church. So, what you see is this order that God has established.

I’m going to give you a couple of passages so that you know that what I’m saying is not just off the top of my head.

(1 Corinthians 14:40) “But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner.”

That’s the conclusion as he’s talking about issues when people are going their own way, making their own decisions; women are talking in church and there’s confusion.

(1 Corinthians 14:33) “For God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.”

So, there is clearly an order that God has ordained. What is that order? Well, God established the church.

In Ephesians 2:16, it’s saying that Christ was reconciling both into one body. In this passage He’s dealing with Israel as well as the Gentiles. “... through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.

(Ephesians 2:17) AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR;

(Ephesians 2:18) for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.

(Ephesians 2:19) So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,

(Ephesians 2:20) having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone,

(Ephesians 2:21) in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord"

So, as Christ turns to Peter, He goes, "I will build My church" which we know is Christ's church. So, what does he do then? After turning to Peter and saying, "I'm going to build My church", he then says, "but I've established you", that is the twelve apostles, "to be a part of that foundation." So, Christ the cornerstone, and the apostles are the foundation and from that they began to ordain other pastors in the churches. They have the authority then to appoint overseers. So, you see that continual authority being recognized throughout the process.

In the book of Hebrews, Christ is giving an example in chapter 3 that Moses is faithful in the fact that he's a servant. The passage is going to be saying that he was appointed.

(Hebrews 3:1) "Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession."

That's probably one of the few times you see Him being referred to as an "Apostle"; which just means that He was sent.

(Hebrews 3:2) "He was faithful to Him who appointed Him..."

So, did Jesus claim that authority Himself? No. It goes on to say,

(Hebrews 3:3) "For He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house."

(Hebrews 3:4) For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.

(Hebrews 3:5) Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later;

(Hebrews 3:6) but Christ was faithful as a Son..."

(Hebrews 5:1) "For every high priest taken from among men is appointed..."

You're going to see this word "appointed" several times and I guess I'm trying to get "appoint" across.

"For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins;

(Hebrews 5:2) he can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is beset with weakness;

(Hebrews 5:3) and because of it he is obligated to offer sacrifices for sins, as for the people, so also for himself."

He's going to be talking about the fact that you need a greater priest than man because he's not going to live forever.

(Hebrews 5:4) "And no one takes the honor to himself..."

That's what God has done with the church. He has established the church in such a way that no one should be able to just walk in and take authority for himself. The passage reads, "And no one takes the honor to himself, but receives it when he is called by God". Now, it goes on and what we understand is that God calls us first of all, like Paul. Paul was actually called by God himself, wasn't he? He talks about that in Galatians 1, but when was Paul sent out? Who was he sent out by? The answer is the church. You see that in Acts 13. If you look at the very beginning of this chapter, Paul was in Antioch. If you remember how that came to be. Barnabas was putting his arm around Paul and comforting him because he had been an outcast with the church. People were still afraid of him because he had been killing people. So, it's understandable that they would be afraid of somebody like that.

(Acts 13:1) "Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon..."

Then, it gives the names of the different ones. What is it talking about? Well, it's talking about the authority in the church.

(Acts 13:2) "While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'"

Once again, Paul had already been called by God, but God's never going to work outside of that which He has ordained to oversee the continuous of it; which is "I will build My church". So, who ultimately sends him out? Look how it's described in verse 4, "So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit..." Scripture is elevating the position of the church. Whereas at the foundation of it, you have Christ the cornerstone and the apostles, but what is Christ building? What is this foundation? Of course, Christ is the church.

If you look with me in Acts 14, in distant lands they've gone to Antioch. Paul has been stoned and beaten severely and gone through a lot of trials.

It says this in Acts 14:21, "After they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch,

(Acts 14:22) strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, 'Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.'"

Of course, they actually saw Paul get stoned, which was just shortly before this. So, I perceive it to be an understatement. I can just imagine a lot of them going, "They're stoning Paul! Ok, now he's dead." Then he stands up and he says, "Ok, through many trials..." So, that's true.

(Acts 14:23) "When they had appointed elders for them in every church..."

So, now we're seeing the foundation of the church. That's where Acts is showing us the progression of the foundation. First, it starts with the apostles and then the Holy Spirit comes upon them. Then Peter preaches this message and people start coming. Then you need people to oversee the widows and you find men that have this character trait and are filled with the Spirit of God. You begin to realize that these leaders first become recognizable to the body at large and then they're appointed by those that are in leadership. So, there's kind of a two-stage thing. It's one of the things that we do when we have somebody taking on a position. Some of you have probably been here long enough to know what we do. We pass out the Timothy and Titus sheet and we say, "Ok, if you know something that we don't know..." Sort of speak now or forever hold your peace because we're wanting to know if there's anything in the character of this individual that would keep him from this particular office. Whether it's Titus 1 when it's dealing with character traits or in 1 Timothy 3, one thing is clear, he has to be above reproach. That means that nobody can bring any accusations against him. So, when we place people up front, we ask you if you know something about his character that would keep him from doing this then you need to let us know. I've had people come up to me afterwards and say, "I should have let you know." I go, "Well, you didn't", which is part of your responsibility. Also, we understand that God brings in people many times that aren't going to end up doing the right thing and that's God's sovereignty too. However, the leadership has to do what's right, and they have to continue and maintain the integrity of the church.

In 2 Timothy 4:6, he's getting ready to die. He says, "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come." So, we know that he's about ready to go. We know that Nero is going to chop off his head. In the passage as he writes Timothy, he says, "I need you to make every effort to see me." (2 Timothy 4:9) Then, he writes this, "for Demas..." Now, we know that Demas was a partner for a while with Paul. You say, "Well, Paul made a mistake." I don't believe so; any more than Jesus made a mistake with Judas.

(2 Timothy 4:10) "For Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica..."

He talks about others and ultimately mentions Titus as well. So, the point is that you're going to have people that come in and are doing the right thing, but then fall away. So, you have to make decisions based on those particular things. The point is that you're preserving the integrity of the church, and you have to maintain that. As long as you maintain that, then you can start setting things in order. Once that starts going array and you don't maintain that, then you have no recourse. So, God is building a church, and you have to make sure that it's built

right. If there is a block that's out of place, you have to remove the block. So, the foundation has to remain clear. This is how you set a house in order.

If you go back to Titus, you'll see this in the passage we're dealing with in which he talks about setting things in order. He's using a summary statement in verse 5, "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order". Now, the term that he uses in the Greek is making reference to the fact of setting things straight. So, one of the titles that we've placed on this book is "Making Things Right". That's that picture of "I set you at Crete to make things right because things are in disorder". We know that as he says, "whole families are being upset, lazy gluttons..." As well as when you look a bit further in Titus 3:10, he warns them saying, "Reject a factious man." He knows that there's going to be arguments and debates about division and those kinds of things, but you can't let that be a part of the church.

(Titus 1:5) "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains..." Another way of putting it is "what is lacking". According to verse 5, how do you set things in order? You appoint elders.

If you go back to the Old Testament, there's nothing new about this. This is the way God has worked all along. So, when you look in Isaiah, you realize where there is not the leadership that there should be then you have the tearing down of the whole structure.

It's interesting the way that he describes leadership in this Old Testament text:

(Isaiah 3:1) "For behold, the Lord GOD of hosts is going to remove from Jerusalem and Judah Both supply and support..."

That's actually how he's describing leadership. I'll show you what I mean as we go on.

"Both supply and support, the whole supply of bread and the whole supply of water." In other words, do you remember when Jesus is talking to Peter, and He says, "Do you love Me?" and what He ultimately tells Peter to do? "Feed My sheep. Take care of them." That's what leadership does. It supplies, it maintains, it continues to keep.

(Isaiah 3:2) "The mighty man and the warrior,
The judge and the prophet,
The diviner and the elder,

(Isaiah 3:3) "The captain of fifty and the honorable man,
The counselor and the expert artisan,
And the skillful enchanter."

What happened to them? The point is that they're gone and that's why the problem arises in verse 4. So, why have authority? Well, the reason is that God has so ordained that pastors, teachers, and evangelists are for the purpose of supplying, taking care of, nurturing, and keeping on target; as Paul will write in 1 Timothy, once again, "The church is the pillar and support of the truth". But you have to have men of integrity to uphold that truth. If you don't

have men of integrity to uphold the truth, then they're going to go their own way. In some way, that's the situation in Crete; everybody is fundamentally doing what they think is right. It kind of goes back to the point that the church is not a democracy because if that were true, you'd have everybody voting. If you had enough people voting the wrong way, then you would have the church doing the wrong thing. So, it obviously is not that. It's not socialistic. I think some people would lean on anarchy. There's actually a form of government called anarchy form of government; which fundamentally is a people that are skeptical about any kind of authority. So, they're always questioning "What gives you the right?" We know that's the old story here again, that goes back to the Old Testament, "What gives you the right, Moses, to do what you did?" So, God begins to reveal to us that you're going to have battles in that.

The whole ordaining process and I would say this appointing is very crucial that it can't be about education, nepotism, or even relatives. It has to be standards. A number of years ago, I had somebody that came to the church come up to me, and they told me that they would make a really good deacon or elder. I said, "That would be great." Then they said, "When would you like me to take office?" I said, "Well, it usually takes about 5 to 6 years." They said, "what does that mean?" I said, "Our discipleship usually takes about 5 or 6 years." One of the reasons why we have our discipleship is because we don't want to incorporate a bunch of knowledge; we're trying to find out if you're willing to take not only responsibility but submit to authority yourself. So, the whole process of this is "Is this person submissive to authority?", "Are they longing to do this for the Lord?", and "Will they take correction well or are they going to resist?" So, we're looking for attitudes. We're looking for that heart that desires to follow the Lord. You know, after 5 or 6 years, you get to know somebody. Besides the fact that will you do what it says? When you ask some people, "Have you read through the Old Testament?" They say, "No, I haven't gotten around to it." Then I say, "Let me know when you're finished because we're going to be talking through it and I need you to explain to me the different books of the Bible." People kind of stare at you and say, "Well, we're still working on it." Stop working on it and let's go do it. You're looking for a heart that driven. Somebody that's driven to follow the Lord; somebody that's driven to continue in these things. Then, you take them to the New Testament, and you go, "Tell me what these books are about and what the focus is."

Once again, as Paul says, "For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God." (Acts 20:27) Look, we all like certain books and we kind of do that smorgasbord thing, "I like this book and I don't like this book", but we're wanting you to believe that all Scripture is inspired by God. Here again, part of that is that desire. When Paul addresses both Timothy and Titus, he refers to them as his "true child in the faith". We see that these are individuals that have not only been teachable, but actually have the same heart.

We've quoted this verse before, but just to parallel it, in Philippians 2:19 there is an interesting phrase that he uses in this passage. In some ways, it refers to Titus as well as he states, "But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition."

(Philippians 2:20) For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare.

(Philippians 2:21) For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus.”

You see the same thing happening in Corinthians where Paul sends Titus, and you begin to realize he’s an individual that has been faithful. In 2 Corinthians 7, Paul will share about Titus.

(2 Corinthians 7:5) “For even when we came into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted on every side: conflicts without, fears within.

(2 Corinthians 7:6) But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus.”

So, he begins to refer to Titus in verse 13, “For this reason we have been comforted. And besides our comfort, we rejoiced even much more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all.”

Once again, you begin to see the heart of Titus within that passage and all the way through. In fact, he begins to talk about Titus coming in 2 Corinthians 8:6, “So we urged Titus that as he had previously made a beginning, so he would also complete in you this gracious work”. A “true child in the faith” is basically Paul saying, “These guys think like me, they love the Lord, and they love His people.” Those are the kind of people that you want to invest in because these are the people that will not think of themselves but think of what is best for the body of Christ. Those are the kind of people that you want in the office.

In 2 Timothy 2 Paul encourages Timothy and he says this in verse 1, “You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

(2 Timothy 2:2) The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men...”

Faithful not only to Christ, but also to the body of Christ; which is a key as well.

He continues by saying, “entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

(2 Timothy 2:3) Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.”

That would mean that there has to be some sacrifice. Now, let me emphasize here, not all are called. It needs to be understood that if you’re not called, you’re not in charge because God ordains those that He calls. Then, they’re appointed as the overseers of these.

(2 Timothy 2:4) “No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life...”

Do you remember that one guy that goes, “I would follow You Jesus, but I need to bury my dad”? Of course, in the text there’s inferences that his father hadn’t died yet, but he had to wait until his father did die so that he could get the inheritance in order to go. Jesus says, “No, allow the dead to bury the dead.” His point was that you need to drop your nets and just follow

Me. If I can just clarify the call, it is to such a degree that you can't do anything else. There is no such thing as the "part time" call. It is the dropping of the nets, and there will be times when you might have to make tents. Paul made tents, but that wasn't his profession when he was in the ministry. He made tents because the church at Corinth was perceiving him as taking advantage, "Maybe he's going to try to take money". He says, "I'm not going to take any money from you." He does the same thing in Thessalonica, "I'm not going to take any money from you." Now, he does take money and support from the church at Philippi. He says, "You supported me when nobody else would." Then as soon as he was supported, he went back into full time ministry. So, this whole tent making thing is bogus because it's not understanding what Paul was doing. You have to be willing to do whatever it takes to be the man of God that will fully devote himself to the work, but that's where your heart is. You're going to drop those nets as quickly as you can. So, he begins to call Timothy in this particular chapter, and he says, "You're going to be faithful; you need to do this."

If you look at the requirements in 1 Corinthians 4, it says this in verse 1, "Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God."

(1 Corinthians 4:2) In this case, moreover, it is required..."

So, this is a requirement that we're given. Once again, it's not legalism; it's a requirement or standards.

"...it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy."

You have to be able to trust them. Trust them with what? Well, if they're faithful in little such as mammon, then God will give you the greater riches which is God's people; but you have to be faithful with what God gives you. You see that in Matthew 10, when you look at Jesus calling His disciples, it gives their names within the passage. He tells them what they're going to be doing, "And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" (Matthew 10:7) Many of you are familiar with the passage.

(Matthew 10:9) "Do not acquire gold, or silver, or copper..."

In other words, your trust isn't in these things. I oftentimes hear, and I know it's the way things are done now and I'm not trying to tear down any particular work, but it grieves me when I hear what I call mission institutions; in which before missionaries can go overseas, they have to get a certain amount of support. They won't let them go until they get this amount of support. Now, let me just ask you, where do you see that in Scripture? Paul just goes. There are times, as he says, "I've had little, and I've had a lot, but I've learned to be content in whatever circumstance I'm in."

The calling of God is so efficacious that you can't not go. I think we've kind of lost that because we've made everything professional. I also think it's one of the reasons why people think, "What gives you the right?" It's because the whole sense of calling is no longer there. The whole sense of the power of the ordination and recognition of the body, "This guy has these

characteristics”, then the appointment of those in charge. So, in Matthew 10 he begins to talk about these things, and he says, “Look, it’s not going to be easy.” Here again, we’re talking about those who are called. Not all are called to do this, but once again, if you’re not called then you’re not in that position of authority.

(Matthew 10:16) “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.

(Matthew 10:17) But beware of men, for they will hand you over to the courts and scourge you in their synagogues;

(Matthew 10:18) and you will even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.

(Matthew 10:19) But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say; for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say.

(Matthew 10:20) For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.”

Now, this is very interesting, verse 21, what are we talking about? Family. Once again, so many times “it’s about the family”. Not the family of God. That’s why Jesus makes that distinction, “Who’s My family? The ones who do the will of God.”

“Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents...”

“Well, my kid wouldn’t.” Oh really? If they don’t love the Lord, they might. “No, I did too much good for them.” Ok. Keep believing that one.

(Matthew 10:22) “You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.

(Matthew 10:23) But whenever they persecute you in one city, flee to the next...”

Then it goes on to say in verse 24, “A disciple is not above his teacher”.

In other words, things are going to happen. I’ve had people that were being discipled and after a while, they begin to think that they’re above you because they start getting to know a little bit of the Bible. A little bit of knowledge of the Bible is more dangerous than anything else.

It goes on and says,

(Matthew 10:25) “It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher...”

Once again, it’s not competitiveness, but a desire to grow.

His phrase in verse 26 is “do not fear them”.

He's putting it into the context of not only the governors, but your family. Don't be afraid of them or fear those who kill the body. When you drop on down, he puts it into the context of verse 37, "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me."

He's talking about the calling. I remember a number of years ago, Franklin Graham was a rebellious son in his earlier years. One time when he was interviewed during his time of rebellion and his father was still preaching very faithfully in evangelistic meetings; and as they were interviewing Franklin, he says, "My dad is never home. He's always out preaching. He just doesn't spend time with the family." I was fairly young at the time, and I remember thinking, "Oh that stinks", but he was called. Let me just be really clear about this, people leave their family to go to school; they leave their family to make a career; they leave their family to make money, but they're not willing to put their family on hold for the kingdom of heaven? The calling is so intense. Of course, later on Franklin comes around, "My dad did the right thing." So, the problem wasn't Billy; the problem was Franklin. When Franklin gave his life to the Lord, he realized that. Really the greatest thing a father could ever do is be devoted to God. Once again, I know the perception is "I need to always be there for my kid." You can't always be there for your kid and as the disciples make it really clear to Jesus, "We've left family for You." Jesus says, "Don't worry about that. You'll be rewarded." I would say one of the greatest rewards that God gives is the reward of taking care of our families because God is the one that really changes the hearts, isn't He? If you think about it, He's the one that you really trust to do that.

In Matthew 19 Peter is talking about the fact that Jesus said that it's hard for a rich man to get into heaven. Then the disciples go, "Well, who can be saved if rich people can't be?" (Matthew 19:25)

(Matthew 19:26) "And looking at them Jesus said to them, 'With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.'

(Matthew 19:27) Then Peter said to Him, 'Behold, we have left everything and followed You; what then will there be for us?'"

When you've left everything, you begin to wonder "what's in it for me?"

(Matthew 19:28) "And Jesus said to them, 'Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

(Matthew 19:29) And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life.

(Matthew 19:30) But many who are first will be last..."

What is He saying? The most important thing you can ever do is follow God. See, our faith is based on putting God first. Then, in putting God first, we believe that all these things will be added unto us. So, what does a minister or those that are called convey? He should be conveying that we're going to put God first above all else.

I remember shortly after we had begun the ministry, we would always try to take pretty short vacations of 3 or 4 days. Of course, after 3 days, I get antsy. So, I can't really say it's necessarily a spiritual thing with me, and that's not taking a lot of credit. We've always felt like we need to be there for the body of Christ. We've had people that have died when we've taken off. Sometimes even uncanny that it seems like the same day we decide to take off, something happens, and we just turn around. One of the things that grieve me about my brother's death is that when he passed away as a deacon of the church that he was going to, the pastor was on vacation and wouldn't take off to go to my brother's funeral. Where's the devotion? This is a deacon within the church. We're not even talking about a "lowly" parishioner. There's no such thing, but the sad thing is that Scripture tells us we need to be devoted to the body of Christ.

In this passage, he's saying that you're going to make sacrifices and that's how powerful the calling is. The calling is so powerful you can't not be there; you have to drop everything. I remember with our kids, "Dad, where are you going?" "I need to go back." Of course, they're upset and frustrated and everything like that and the only thing I could say to them is "Sorry, we're going back". I remember my dad making those kinds of decisions in his ministry. In many ways, it was not only building a respect for him, but it was helping me see the pattern that God had ordained for the leadership; that there is this kind of devotion that is there.

In 3 John 1:7 it elevates those that have gone out for the name.

"For they went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles.

(3 John 1:8) Therefore we ought to support such men..."

He's talking about those that have been called to the ministry to such a degree that they've gone out and have made their lives very vulnerable in this realm. Paul makes it clear when he's talking to the Corinthians, he says, "I know that you perceive me as really a nobody when you see me in person because I'm unimpressive. I've suffered all things for your sake." It's a very interesting way that he begins to deal with the Corinthians. Of course, in some cases they were making fun of him, and he was coming back with, "These beatings...I did that for you." It reminds me of Christ being on the cross and while being reviled, He didn't revile in return. I've often told those that are in ministry, "You and I don't have the option to dislike people. We're stewards of God." 1 Corinthians 13 says that we don't take into account a wrong suffered. Now, you can disagree with people. In fact, you are called as an elder and overseer to disagree with wrong.

(2 Timothy 4:1) "I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:

(2 Timothy 4:2) preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke...

So, two of those are pretty intense; they're like reprimands.

"...exhort" means encouraging; "...with great patience".

(2 Timothy 4:3) "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,

(2 Timothy 4:4) and will turn away their ears from the truth..."

Paul had ordained certain leaders and then turns to say, "I've finished my course; you finish your course." He's placed it in the hands of Timothy. So, he's now the head. In every church they're going to be establishing the authority of the overseers. What are they looking for? Well, in Titus 1, we have the list of things and the characteristics of what we're looking for. It ultimately goes back to that fundamental question, "Why is this person chosen?" I'd like to take you back into the Old Testament, where we have that question raised in Numbers 12. In this setting it was Miriam and Aaron that spoke against Moses. The statement that they make in verse 2 is, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us as well?"

Now, verse 3 says that Moses was very, very humble and not that Moses was a pushover. Once again, humility doesn't mean that somebody acquiesces to somebody else; it means that he's humble before God. Scripture says, "Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God and He'll exalt you." So, Moses was a man that would obey God and we know that he got upset with the people. The point is that whatever God told him; he would do and that was humility. It says that he was the humblest man on the face of the earth.

God defends him and He says in verse 6, "If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, shall make Myself known to him." In other words, God is saying, "I ordained him."

When you look at the beginning of the book of Jeremiah, you see Jeremiah being called. I personally believe that a true calling works the same way all the way through.

When Gideon was called to be a mighty warrior, the angel meets him and says, "Oh mighty warrior". Of course, Gideon has been hiding. So, there's nothing about Gideon that made him feel like a mighty warrior. The same thing is true when God called Moses and Moses says, "Look, I really have trouble with the speech thing. So, in that respect, I don't think You really want me to do it." It actually says that God was very angry at him because he was requesting somebody else to speak in his place. That's why Aaron was brought into the mix. Now, what's interesting about that is when God says, "OK, I'll bring somebody in" and Moses says, "You can pick anybody you want to." Which of course, God can pick anybody he wants, but that was "nice" of Moses to say that. So, God picked his brother. Now, I would say to the group at large, that it would be considered nepotism, "Oh, you picked your brother." No, God picked his

brother. You can't consider what people are thinking. You have to go by the Spirit of God and His calling, and it is recognizable. So, He calls Aaron, and we see in this passage God saying, "I'm going to make Myself known to who I'm going to make Myself known."

(Numbers 12:7) "Not so, with My servant Moses, He is faithful in all My household;

(Numbers 12:8) With him I speak mouth to mouth..."

In other words, "There's a very distinctive calling with Moses that's not like any of you."

By the time you go a little bit further in Numbers 16, you have Korah's rebellion. As if they didn't learn something from Miriam, they all assembled against Moses. You might ask me how I know that; it says it in verse 3. Then in verse 4,

"When Moses heard this, he fell on his face". In fact, their whole accusation is "You exalt yourself". No, the ordination exalted him. No man can accept honor unless it is given to him. So, the very act of the ordination is God establishing that authority. There is a calling on the individual, recognition by the body, and then an appointing by the elders. All of those things are God directing.

As you look at the passage, they all assembled against Moses and Moses falls on his face. Then in verse 5, he says, "We'll see what God chooses tomorrow. If you're all still alive tomorrow, God's ok with that, but if you die, He's not ok with it." Of course, we know that the earth swallows these people up. Now, we know that Korah was probably well educated and knew quite a bit, but God didn't choose him. It's very simple, and I often put it in the example of households, why is this guy the father and you have these children? Well, because he was born first. Once again, that's the only answer. So, if the kids would have been born first then they could have been the father; but because they weren't born first, God ordained this guy to be the father of these children and that's the order that God has ordained. You can question the order all you want to, but the fact is that God ordains all authority. One of the problems that you find in Crete is they didn't recognize authority. That's why in Titus 3:10 you have "factional men" that are coming in because they're disagreeing with the authority; but God has ordained that authority for that particular work, and you need to submit to that authority. Now, when you resist that authority, you're resisting God. It doesn't say "because you agree with Him or because you like Him; it's talking about authority. Once again, that whole thing goes into even at the workplace. An example of that is in 1 Timothy 6:1, he starts off by saying, "All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor." That's authority, right? Well, have you ever had an unreasonable boss like Peter says? Even if your boss is unreasonable, you have to submit to that authority. "But I think they're wrong." Ok, but you still have to submit to that authority unless he goes against God and one of His laws. If he tells you to do something wrong like steal or hurt somebody, then clearly; but if he's doing the job completely wrong in your eyes and you could do it far better, guess what? You need to submit to that authority. God establishes that authority for that reason. So, he says, "All who

are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and our doctrine..."

See, this is a doctrine conforming to godliness, and it needs to look a certain way in order for the testimony of our doctrine to be proclaimed appropriately. So, what's the best way that we proclaim the name of God? The best way to do this at the workplace is by submitting to authority. Once again, you see this in 1 Peter 2, and he expounds upon it in an even greater way.

(1 Timothy 6:2) "Those who have believers as their masters must not be disrespectful to them..."

Now, you don't even have the luxury to be snarky.

"...because they are brethren, but must serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these principles."

(1 Timothy 6:3) "If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness."

What does godliness look like? Godliness is an act of faith. This is fundamentally one of the great points of the book of Romans, you and I believe that by walking by faith, we trust God to be sovereign, in control, and that He's doing right. So, we have a responsibility to do what He tells us to do in any given situation. According to James, in tribulations we can rejoice because we know that God is stretching our faith and making us stronger. Then, according to Romans, we know that God has established all authority and in that, we submit to the authority believing; walking by faith. We believe that God will take care of us. He will vindicate us. He will do what's right. Once again, when Paul is thrown into prison, he doesn't fight the authority. He just goes to prison. Now, when he can stand and give testimony, he gives testimony; but you don't see any hostility that he has towards the authority. In fact, he always comes back in a very honorable way, and he addresses them as such whether it's King Agrippa or Caesar, it doesn't matter.

So, if you look in 1 Timothy 6:4, he begins to say that if anyone disagrees with this, "he's conceited and understands nothing." The only thing he's trying to do is stir up strife, suspicions, constant friction and it's a powerplay. It keeps coming back to that fundamental point that is "Do you and I believe that God ordains?" Yes, we do. That's where the church is in this particular text.

In 2 Corinthians 7, you begin to realize that there are times when God calls people and sometimes, they're actually going to have to correct. In verse 9 He causes sorrow, but the goal is the repentance of the heart.

I wonder why he starts off in Hebrews 13:1, "Let love of the brethren continue." Why do you think he does that? It's because it's hard to love the brethren all the time. I hate to tell you, but you guys aren't always loveable. I might be, but you're not.

(Hebrews 13:2) "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers..."

It goes on to talk about that, but he says in verse 5, "Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself..."

Who is it that he's talking about? Jesus.

"...for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU.""

(Hebrews 13:6) "THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID."

Then if you look in verse 7, there's a reason why he's tying the two together.

"Remember those who led you..." How would you know the right people to lead you? Well, they have the same mind as Christ, "I will never leave you; nor forsake you."

"Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith."

In other words, the passage is saying to look at the way they live; look at the things they do, and by patterning your life after them, you'll be living like Christ.

(Hebrews 13:8) "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."

Why is he saying that? Once again, if you're imitating those that are following Christ, what are they going to be like? The one thing that I really appreciate about those that have devoted themselves to Christ and are called is you can count on the fact that they're going to continue to do that. No matter what the attacks are, "I have decided to follow Jesus." They don't turn back, and you see that fortitude in them. There will be some that fall away from the faith; God will reveal that, but those that are steadfast, truly His and especially those that are called are going to hang in there.

There's a great testimony when you begin to look at Jeremiah; you see a young man that at the very beginning is trying to argue, "You've got the wrong guy." As you go into the book, you begin to realize that God is molding this individual. There comes a point where Jeremiah goes, "I wish I were dead. No, no, I wish I had never been born." So, he hits the wall kind of in the middle, but then he comes out in the end, and he now begins to act like God; in which he won't forsake the people even though they're stubborn. They go down to Egypt, and they're rebelling against God; he can't leave them. Even though he has the option to go wherever he wants, he won't go there. He won't think about himself. The only thing he can think of is "these people need me", and he goes and stays with this rebellious people. From what we understand

historically, he actually dies there. They kill him. Once again, that's what is said historically; we don't know whether it's true or not.

In Hebrews 13, you see the same pattern going on, His statement in Hebrews 13:16 is "do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

(Hebrews 13:17) "Obey your leaders and submit to them..."

That sounds very legalistic, doesn't it? Why?

"...for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account."

Once again, a young person might say, "Why do I have to obey my parents?" Well, the Bible says to honor and obey your parents. "Well, they've made a lot of mistakes in their life." "I know they have, but you walk by faith and believe that God will take care of you if you do the right thing." We don't ask you to parent your parents. We're asking you to submit and do what God tells you to do. It's the same thing with the wife; we're not telling you that your husband is always right. Obviously, he's not. He probably has a track record of being wrong, but the point is that you submit to him because you trust God; not because you trust him, and God told you to do that. Well, God establishes that authority within the church. Hopefully they're not doing something inappropriate. If they are, then in this particular case with Titus, he would probably have to go do something. We had something a number of years back and Sonny would probably remember it. I don't want to go into any detail, but we actually called the Southern Baptist Convention because we knew something was going on, and we knew that somebody needed to be taken out of office. From time to time, you need to do that to keep the sanctity of the office. The passage says, "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch..."

Once again, it's that fidelity like in John 10, the good shepherd keeps watch.

"...they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account."

So, who's going to hold them accountable? God.

The great thing about being a kid at home and your mom and dad telling you what to do is that you're accountable to your parents. That should be a sigh of relief; because when you see the rebellion in Corinthians, he says, "We're going to cast them out of the church so that his flesh will be devoured by satanic forces." What is that? The world. His point is that as long as you're in the church, you're under the protection of the church. One of the ways you're under the protection of the church is the church will talk to you about things that you need to clear up. They'll point you in the right direction. So, it's like an umbrella of protection. Once you step outside of it, you're no longer under the protection of the church. Now, you're in the world and the consequences of the things you do will begin to hit you out there.

"Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you."

I don't want to read too much into this, but I think it's basically saying "don't irritate your leaders"; because you don't want them having to respond in a way that would then bring up even more resistance to you. That's one of the reasons why Scripture says to refuse the fractious man; somebody's going to be arguing about it, just stop.

In Titus you see the necessity to put that order in there and the fact that God has ordained that. So, in every church you put these overseers; sometimes often defined as the word "*episkopos*", which is where we get the word "episcopal". It's basically somebody that is overseeing and administrating, and, in some cases, it's used as judging. So, they're in positions to make judgement calls and to discern. So, God ordains that order for protection. Once that order is correct, then things begin to fall into place. If that's ambiguous, you're never going to have order in the church. Scripture shows us how to do that.

How do you bring things back in order? I would say in households, dads, you get right with first. Don't go around expecting everybody else to be right. You make sure you're living your life in such a way that is above reproach. If you do that, then God will begin to establish the proper order in that. God begins to work on behalf of the authority that He ordains. So, as you as a father or head of the house begin to do what is right; you be loving to your wife; you be giving to your wife. She may argue with you, and you resist the factious thing. I'm not saying I've always done that. I'm just saying that it's much better when you do that because then God begins to work on your behalf. There's a realization that she's a joint heir with Christ, as 1 Peter 3 says. So, your prayers won't be hindered, and you really need those prayers in order to really rule well for God to work on your behalf.

So, it's a very interesting beginning. Next week we're going to be going through this list that is given of the qualities that you're looking for. It's fundamentally saying that you have to be above reproach; the person can't be self-consumed with what they want but has to be willing to give it up. Of course, you see where Christ calls those into those particular offices. It is a calling and there is a difference between somebody that is called and somebody that is not. God makes those distinctions. I don't make them; God does. In 1 Timothy 3 it says that if anyone aspires to the office of overseer, it's a good thing that he desires to do. I think that it's admirable that you would aspire to the office. However, I would say that if somebody desires the office, there's probably something wrong. There clearly is a calling that comes in and you just can't not do it.

The way Paul puts it is "I have a stewardship that's been given to me. If I do it willingly, I have a reward; but God is going to have me do it." Jonah is a perfect example. You're going to do it, but you have to do it with a willing heart. God ordains that office.

Closing Prayer:

Father, thank You for Your word that establishes this authority; and help us to continue in this realm in which the Spirit of God begins to lead a heart. We know that this is You moving in the person. They become so devoted that they're willing to give up everything, everything to follow You; to serve You. As they do that, You elevate them because they've humbled themselves to follow You and to give up all for Your sake. Lord, You've been so good to take care of us throughout the years. We just give You thanks for this. Lord help us all to realize that this is truly a calling, and it should never be a position that somebody desires. It should ever be that You touch our hearts, You then affirm, You solidify by the appointment. All these things are orchestrated by You. May we follow according to this orderly passion that You have set forth in this pattern that You have designed for the church. May You then bless the church as we do this in Jesus' name. Amen.