

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

These notes are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye, mistakes can possibly be found. Therefore, he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabile.org.

Date: June 24, 2018

Sermon Title: Order in the Church

Sermon Series: Titus

Text: Titus 1:5-9

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Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in **the Storyline of the Bible**. She is determined by design to have a **God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching** focused on personal **discipleship** through intentional and systematic instruction; a **Global-impacting mission** that resolves to be a **church planting church**; and a **Grace-based fellowship** where disciples are invited to live under a **reigning grace** characterized by a **Gospel-driven sanctification** that celebrates a divine **monergism** to the Christian life.

Date: June 24, 2018
Title: "Order in the Church"
Text: Titus 1:5-10
Theme: The JESUS SEED produces the GOSPEL FRUIT of *Order*.

Verses 1-4 set the tone and establish the melodic line; Jesus *works*. Verse 5 says there is disorder in Crete and the false teachers are contradicting this theme. The answer to the problem is establishing elders who in their character and conduct (vv. 5-9) can refute and silence the false teachers (vv. 10-16).

It appears because of the house church context, entire households were in disorder. This chaotic existence must be stopped and set straight by appointing leaders who live orderly lives.

I. The problem in Crete (v. 5) – the church is in disorder

- ⁵ "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you,"

The word "order" is of interest. It is the word **epidiorthoo**. We are a little familiar with the word because of *orthodoxy* [i.e. "right/straight thinking"]. Or our English word orthotic [A support, brace, or splint used to support, align, prevent, or correct the function of movable parts of the body] and orthodontist [An **orthodontist** is a type of dentist who specializes in straightening crooked teeth]. This word in our text means, "To straighten further; to set straight thoroughly in addition to; to set in order."

Things in Crete were moving in the right direction, but needed further straightening. They were slightly off and if not corrected would cause significant shipwreck in the future. "What was left unfinished was the organization of the newly formed churches."¹

When you have tire work done on your car, you need to always make sure your tires are aligned properly. If they are misaligned, there will be a slight vibration in the steering wheel. We often ignore such "minor" misalignments. Sometimes this misalignment is not noticeable until you are going rather fast. Often we simply ignore the problem and allow the tires to wear down to the point of "alignment." But such an alignment is not correct. In fact, in the absence of a properly aligned car, it can go straight, but it will vibrate you without mercy.

This is equally true concerning the church. We have "the teaching" [JESUS *works*]. If we do not align our ministries with the teaching, there will be a misalignment that results in a slight vibration in the steering. It might be ignored, but it is leading to bigger problems down the road. And if we do not make the necessary adjustments, we will never be able to really get up to speed and go faster and further.

The Elders of the church are to make sure this alignment happens. We have a theological DNA and it is their primary function of the Elders to protect that DNA internally and to promote that DNA externally. If the Elders do not pay due diligence to this, the church vibrate itself to pieces.

There is *disorder* in the churches in Crete. Paul left Titus in Crete, and in his absence, Titus was to go and appoint Elders *in every city/church*. When I read this, I consider the task to be daunting. In many ways, what we have here is what *The Timothy Initiative*² is doing in Egypt and elsewhere. Egypt is the geographically location we as a church have partnered with *The Timothy Initiative* in order to plant churches globally. Church growth happens through the Timothy principle stated in 2 Timothy 2:2.

The word “appoint” occurs only here in the Pastorals. It simply means, “To place down.” Although we believe those appointed are men, we do not believe the work is established or advanced without the assistance of women. Whomever these men might be, there must be corresponding women who are of this type of quality and ability. The work must have this ordered structure and co-regent expression in the church just as it was in the Garden.

What we see in Crete is Paul’s Mission in and through the Church. This is how God’s Vision advances for the entire created order. This is the pattern we are to replicate. This is our Mission as a local church.

What the problem was is not only evident in 1:1-4, but is further explained in 1:10-16. We will hold off on looking at vv. 10-16. But the solution offered in vv. 5-9 speaks to the nature of the problem.

II. The solution of appointing Elders – putting in play orderly people (vv. 6-9)

“Above reproach means to have nothing on one’s conduct on which someone could base an accusation. Such is to be the overall characteristic of an elder. Yet Paul further defines this blamelessness with sixteen qualities. These qualities are in three areas: family life (v. 6), personal life (vv. 7, 8), and doctrinal beliefs (v. 9).”³

It appears that those who are called elders in this place are the same as those termed bishops in Titus 1:7. We believe Elders are Bishops are Pastors.

“The *overseer* is another term for the same official position of leadership as the “elder.” This is seen in the interchange of the two terms in this passage and in Acts 20:17, 28, as well as in the parallels between these verses and 1 Tim 3:1-7.”⁴

We also believe because of the plural form, there are to be a plurality of Elders. Although we believe the terms are synonymous, we also believe those occupying the office are not necessarily equal in function simply because of gifting and appointment.

Two things are highlighted.

A. They are “ordered” in their personal life (vv. 6-8)

- ⁶ “namely, if any man is **above reproach**, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. ⁷ For the overseer must be **above reproach** as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, ⁸ **but** hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled,”

The problem appeared concentrated in the leadership. We are identifying the leaders as those who are leading and teaching in the church. There are always multiple problems within any local church. Not all of them are of the same intensity. This problem, however, was primary.

An initial observation can be made by what is said. A problem within the leadership was one of character and integrity. As we will see in verse 16, those who profess to know God were leading godless lives. Thus the emphasis on “above reproach” (vv. 6, 7).

The word for “above reproach” or “blameless” is the same in both verses and occurs in 1 Tim. 3:10 to describe the deacons. The thought is that of being above accusation.

There are two categories. The first speaks to his married life and family (v. 6) and the second addresses his personality or temperament (v. 7). The first accents how he relates to others and the second how he relates to himself. Both seem to overlap in the area of management or oversight. Can he manage his home and can he manage himself? Is he a person of excess or self-control?

Verse 8 shows the contrast, “But/alla.” The verses are not exhaustive but suggestive. **You are to appoint people who live controlled and ordered lives.** Why? Because *the Jesus Seed always produces gospel fruit* and one of the “fruits” of the Holy Spirit is this controlled or ordered life style.

“The emphasis is on good behavior and the ability to teach. Thus these leaders embody the fact that the gospel results in ‘godliness’ (Titus 1:1).”⁵

Another expression of this same idea is that of **insubordination**. This will be a reoccurring thought throughout Titus. Those who have the JESUS SEED bear the fruit of obedience. Those who do not have the JESUS SEED do not obey. We will come back to this in our next lesson, but for now let us continue with the idea of self-control or *order*.

Apparently, and we have good reason to believe such is the case, those who were leading the church astray were not living controlled or ordered lives and their personal chaos impacted the church negatively.

Verse 9 appears to shift the descriptive from their personal life to that of their responsibilities.

What is the issue in Crete? How does this inform our text?

B. They are “ordered” in their pastoral function (v. 9)

- ⁹“holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.”

The first part of v. 9 tells us they are “straight” in their thinking. They are *ordered* theologically. Those who were to occupy the office of Elder were noted as individuals who “[held] fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching.”

One commentator makes the following observation concerning Elders and this paragraph. “Elders exist on account of the gospel. Elders are gospel men.”⁶

The word “hold fast” occurs only four times in the New Testament.

- “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will **hold** to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Matt. 6:24).
- “No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will **hold** to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Luke 16:13).
- “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, **support** the weak, be patient toward all men” (1 Thess. 5:14).
- “**Holding fast** the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers” (Titus 1:9).

Those who are to be Elders are those who openly identify with “the teaching.” They oppose the “the virus causing the sickness.” They stand against the one and align with the other. The outcome of this alliance with faithful words is two-fold.

The reason why they must be *ordered* theologically is “**so that.**” Two reasons are offered and this will play out in the following paragraphs.

“The ability to teach is the distinguishing mark of a pastor or elder. This includes both teaching what is right and refuting error. The reason for this emphasis is clear from what follows (vv. 10-16).”⁷

1. The first reason is to **instruct** others in this *ordered* theology [positive – apologetic].

Let us begin with the positive [“to exhort in sound doctrine”]. The word “exhort” is **parakaleo**, “To call alongside.” There is to be an appeal to the audience to join them in this *ordered* theology. Paul uses this word several times in the pastorals (1 Tim. 1:3; 2:1; 5:1; 6:2; 2 Tim. 4:2) and then three times in Titus (1:9; 2:6, 15).

- “Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to **exhort** and to convince the gainsayers” (Titus 1:9).
- “Young men likewise **exhort** to be sober minded” (Titus 2:6).

- “These things speak, and **exhort**, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee” (Titus 2:15).

As Elders we need to be inviting the church into *ordered* theology. This *ordered* theology is **sound** theology/doctrine/teaching.

It is of interest to see this words occurrence in the pastorals.

- “For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to **sound** doctrine” (1 Tim. 1:10).
- “If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to **wholesome** words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness” (1 Tim. 6:3).
- “Hold fast the form of **sound** words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 1:13).
- “For the time will come when they will not endure **sound** doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears” (2 Tim. 4:3).
- “Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by **sound** doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers” (Titus 1:9).
- “This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be **sound** in the faith” (Titus 1:13).
- “But speak thou the things which become **sound** doctrine” (Titus 2:1).
- “That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, **sound** in faith, in charity, in patience” (Titus 2:2).

The Greek word is where we get our English word **hygiene**. It relates to health, healthy. Healthy teaching leads to vitality and life. Unhealthy teaching leads to sickness and death.

This is the **apologetic** element of the pulpit ministry. It offers the reason as to why what is taught is true and accords with the faithful words, the teaching, and sound doctrine.

2. The second reason is to **refute** those who contradict this *ordered* theology [negative – polemic].

We continue by noting the negative [“to refute those who contradict”]. The word “refute” occurs several times throughout the New Testament. We will note those occurrences in the pastorals.

- “Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear” (1 Tim. 5:20).
- “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:2).
- “Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers” (Titus 1:9).
- “This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith” (Titus 1:13).
- “These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee” (Titus 2:15).

The “refuting” expresses itself in showing what is sound or healthy or ordered theology in contrast to that which is unsound, unhealthy, and disordered. Preaching / instruction that is contrary to the faithful words and the teaching is to be “refuted.” That which contradicts leads to chaos and spiritual anarchy.

This is the **polemic** element of the pulpit ministry. It offers the reason as to why what is taught is false and in error and does not align with the faithful words, the teaching, and sound doctrine.

For the purpose of this sermon series, we have separated vv. 5-9 from vv. 10-16. The two paragraphs and in fact, 2:1-10 are all tied together. The teaching that contradicts is noted in vv. 10-16. The instruction in sound doctrine follows in 2:1-10. We have separated our study into paragraphs for the sake of clarity, but such clarity can be lost if we do not follow Paul’s flow of thought as expressed in this Letter as a whole.

Those who occupy the office of Elder are those who understand the necessary link between one’s profession of faith in Christ and the resultant fruit or obedience that follows. You cannot have the one without the other and you must not reverse the order. Elders are to be those whose life and theology align. There is harmony between the two. And the reason why such is necessary is because of the responsibility they have to the truth and to the church family.

Titus 1:1 lays out our initial idea that “a knowledge of the truth accords with godliness” and how all of the various elements of truth, godliness, eternal life, preaching, and entrust are parts of one whole. There is a symbiotic relationship in all of this. Truly, the Bible tells a single *Story* and at the center of this *Story* is JESUS.

A reason why we are reaching certain conclusions in our understanding of Titus is because of what we are about to read in vv. 10-16. The error is exposed. This exposure gives us the other side of the conversation. Let us read it, but save our thoughts for our next study.

Does It Really Matter?

To the believing:

- The descriptive concerning Elders is not extraordinary. The descriptive is what the JESUS SEED looks like in real time. This is the GOSPEL FRUIT produced by the JESUS SEED.
- Only those matching the descriptive should be appointed as Elders of the church in every town.
- As Elders appoint others to this office, the church has the “check list” as to who should occupy the office and affirm the decision of the Elders to appoint such people to the office.

To the unbelieving:

- Do not think you can live a godless life and still claim to be Christian.
- Your good work will never merit God’s gifting.
- You must believe the GOSPEL.

¹ *The Reformation Study Bible* on Titus 1:5.

² See TTIonline.org

³ *Nelson's NKJV Study Bible* on Titus 1:6.

⁴ <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/Titus+1>

⁵ *ESV Study Bible* on Titus 1:5-9.

⁶ *The Gospel Transformation Bible* on Titus 1:5-9.

⁷ *ESV Study Bible* on Titus 1:9.