

Wow, teams, you really encouraged this old lady this morning.

Thank you for that.

We're going to read this morning the qualifications for overseers.

1 Timothy 3, verse 1 through 7.

The saying is trustworthy.

If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task.

Therefore, an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.

He must manage his own household well, with all dignity, keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household,

How can he care for God's church?

He must not be a recent convert or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil.

Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

Thanks, Penny.

Well, fellows, it's our turn.

So let's pray and ask for the Lord's help.

And we'll take a close look at this passage this morning.

Heavenly Father, thank you again for the gift of your church.

We thank you for the gift of your word, the gift of your Holy Spirit.

Lord, we even thank you for the gift of elders and leaders of your church.

And Lord, we pray that we would view them, view the job description, view the qualifications, view everything that goes along with the office, Lord, through your word.

Lord, we ask that you would allow your word, that you give us the strength and the faith to allow your word to shape our life together and our lives individually.

We pray all this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Sometimes it's all too easy to complain about the guys and gals in charge at work or in the PTA or the Homeowners Association or whatever.

And we shouldn't be complaining.

Complaining is bad.

But that's a different sermon.

And come on, like, it's too easy sometimes, right?

We come to elections and it's time to choose our political leaders that will shape much of our life moving forward.

And we look at the options and we're like, this is the best we can do.

These are all the options.

And now I know, I'm sure that none of you have ever had thoughts like that about me.

Maybe Trav, but not me.

But I think what frustrates us most about leadership is not so much incompetence, although there is a limit to incompetence.

We can tolerate, though, a fair amount of incompetence if we know that the leader is honest and cares about us.

If we feel like the incompetence is not reflecting a lack of care, we can put up with a lot.

Which is why I think that these qualifications, these requirements, resonate with us here in 1 Timothy.

There's really one competency-based requirement.

The rest are character-based.

The Lord knows what we really want deep down, and more importantly, what we really need.

And for the protection and flourishing of Christ's church,

He's communicated some observable virtues and behaviors to look for in men who aspire to lead Christ's church.

We're going to take a look at these today, but we'll sum it up this way.

The office of elder in Christ's church is a noble task.

Therefore, elders ought to personally and publicly reflect the virtue of their calling.

It's a noble task.

Therefore, elders ought to personally and publicly reflect the virtue of their calling.

we're going to see today that it's a pure office marked by personal virtue and public dignity, all right?

Pure office.

Pure might not be the best word, but it was a third P, and I liked it.

So we're going to work with that, and I'll try to explain what I mean by a pure office here.

Let's look at verse one of chapter three.

The saying is trustworthy.

If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task.

First thing we gotta note about this first verse is that there's an assumption or even an affirmation of the fact that men will aspire or desire the office of elder, right?

And Paul's not downplaying that.

He's not saying these aspirations or these desires are bad.

Aspiration, in fact, and ambition are not bad things in and of themselves.

Aspiration is basically a desire with some energy behind it.

And more often than not, we're told to, in scriptures, as we move through the Bible, and maybe even culturally speaking, we're told to identify and properly order our desires, which means that we gotta control and manage bad desires and make sure that good desires are

are prioritized in our actions, in our finances, in our time, and that we're prioritizing the right things that we want, while also keeping bad desires in check.

But here, Paul's saying that desiring to be an elder in God's church is a good thing, and it's worth pursuing, right?

So in a world that's often telling you to manage and to control desires, Paul's saying this is a good desire, this is something worth pursuing.

Even Jesus, when you read the gospels, he doesn't squash ambition.

He tells his disciples, but whoever would be great among you, or whoever desires to be great, whoever aspires to be great among you, must be your servant.

And whoever would be first among you must be your slave.

So ambition and desire are good as long as we direct them properly, right?

As long as they're directed in the proper way towards the proper things.

And one of the ways to properly direct your ambition with eternal effect is to pursue eldership.

Paul's saying to pursue eldership within his church is one way to direct your ambition and aspiration towards a good thing.

And he calls it a noble task or a good work.

Good and noble here have an aesthetic sense, right?

In other words, a beautiful task.

It's a good and beautiful task, or it's good and beautiful because as under shepherds to the great shepherd,

You're bringing to bear Christ's beautiful good work that he accomplished on the gospel for his church in his absence, right?

You're helping to bring the effect and the beautiful work of Christ to bear in tangible ways to people.

And because this is a noble and beautiful task,

Paul says that the men performing this task must reflect a certain baseline level of beauty and nobility.

That there ought to be a baseline level of beauty and nobility that reflects the job, that reflects the task that they're called to do.

So the intention is, just like the fruit of the Spirit, that these things are not plastered on the outside, that this list of attributes and qualifications are not plastered on the outside, but that they're growing out of a born-again, regenerate heart.

That they're coming, that they're genuine, they're not hypocritical, they're coming from a true, converted heart.

In other words, that they're marked by personal virtue, that they're coming from the...

A place of Holy Spirit regeneration.

So we've got a big list here.

Let me read it in verses 2 to 3.

And then I'll try to break down the list.

One, we'll try to show a little bit of the structure of the list.

We'll try to show you how the list came about, how it seems that the list came about.

and then we'll just take a brief look at the items on the list.

We're gonna spend a lot of time on one, and then we're gonna fly through the others.

So here we go, verses two to three.

For a king, oh no, that's chapter two.

That would make not a lot of sense.

Therefore, an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.

Now, we've got a few more, but they're formatted a little differently, and we'll talk about why that is in a second.

But let's just deal with this bullet point list, right?

It just goes kind of right through some individual things.

Again, we're gonna start here with one woman, man, because above reproach is kind of a heading, right?

So he says, an overseer must be above reproach, and let me show you what that looks like, right?

And he starts with a husband of one wife, or one woman, man, which we'll talk about what that means in a second.

And when he says above reproach is,

of this list, this list that I'm about to give you, no one should be able to bring evidence to the contrary that this man is operating or behaving to the contrary of this list that I'm about to give you.

So above reproach doesn't mean that nobody can bring any accusation ever of anything against this person, but primarily the list of qualifications here.

You can't bring evidence that he's currently not meeting this list of qualifications.

Alright, so first one, one woman, one man, or the husband of one wife.

We're going to spend a little time here because this is the most difficult one to interpret, and then how we interpret it, or the tools that we use to understand it and interpret it, are indicative of how we ought to understand it.

the rest of the list, right?

So the way that we kind of figure out what this means is the same tools that we're going to use to figure out what the rest of them mean as well.

So first, before we address the term, and the reason I'm saying one woman man here is because the word for husband and the word for wife are the same as man and woman in Greek.

So the literal phrase is a one wife husband or a one woman man.

So two things about the list before we talk about what that means.

One, the list is very clearly meant to counter the opponents of false teachers.

So Paul's not just saying, all right, abstractly, what should elders look like?

Here's the first things that come to my mind as I think abstractly about what elders should look like.

Rather, he's looking at the false teachers that we've already talked about in chapters one and two, and he's looking at how they are bringing reproach upon the church, and he's saying elders should not be those things, right?

So here's how these false teachers are bringing shame and reproach upon the church in the way that they teach and the way they behave, and elders should be the opposite of that.

And commentator William Mounts does a really good job of making a spreadsheet of all of the qualifications.

It's too big to put on a slide, and we don't have time to go through all of it.

But he puts on a spreadsheet four columns, and the four columns are the qualifications for overseers and elders here in 1 Timothy.

So overseers and elders, by the way, synonymous words.

I'm not gonna do a word study on it throughout the whole New Testament, but they're used synonymously.

They're talking about the same office.

So he lists the qualifications for overseers here in 1 Timothy.

He lists the qualifications for deacons that we're gonna look at next week here in 1 Timothy.

He lists the qualifications for elders that are in Titus.

That's a parallel list that's almost identical here.

and Titus.

So those are the three columns.

And then in a fourth column, he lists everything we know about the false teachers that Paul is speaking against here in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus.

And almost all of them, with two exceptions, and I think if you actually lump the two exceptions in with

A qualification that comes before or after them, there'd be zero exceptions.

But all of the qualifications have a counterpoint in the false teachers, right?

So the false teachers, for example, here, when we're talking about one woman, man, the false teachers in 1 Timothy 4.3 forbid marriage.

And in 2 Timothy 3.6, Paul says that they creep into households and capture weak women burdened with sins and led astray by various passions.

which is a euphemism for the fact that they're seducing, right?

These young widows or young women, right?

So you got these false teachers, right?

That are saying, no, no, no, we're not gonna make a commitment in marriage.

And that are also seducing young women on the side.

And Paul's like, elders should not be that way, right?

They should be a one woman man, right?

Or they should have fidelity in their relationships, right?

with women.

So again, the point I'm trying to make right now is that the whole list, but here specifically, one woman, one man, is meant to counter a behavior and character of the false teachers as they reject marriage and commitment and seduce vulnerable women.

So when we see that the list is specifically developed to correct a real tangible problem, we see more clearly that this is a list of character traits, not credentials.

All right, so we see that Paul's giving this list to counter a real tangible problem at the Church of Ephesus.

And what he's giving is a list of character traits, not credentials.

What do I mean by that?

Well, credentials are things that you've accomplished, things that you've achieved, diplomas, certifications that you've acquired.

So one woman man or one wife husband doesn't mean that an elder has to have a wife or have achieved that marriage credential.

If it did, Paul and most of what we know of Timothy would not have qualified because they were both single.

Paul was definitely single and based on historical evidence and lack of a wife being mentioned with Timothy, we're pretty confident that Timothy was single as well.

It would be also difficult or impossible to make sense of Paul's desire that those in ministry be celibate in 1 Corinthians 7.

Paul says, I'd rather that you were like me, but because of passions, stuff like that, I concede that those in ministry...

can marry.

So what do we do with that desire if Paul's saying that the first credential here, or if we're viewing this as a credential, the first credential of being a pastor is that he has to be married, that he has to have a wife.

So what it does mean, if it doesn't mean that, it doesn't mean that he has to be married.

What it does mean is that an elder must currently have the virtue of fidelity and faithfulness reflected, if applicable, in his relationship with his wife.

Now, that's how we should approach the list.

All right, so those two things.

We gotta see the list as a response to false teachers and as a list of character traits to grow in, not a to-do list of credentials.

All right, so hopefully you can see the difference between credentials and character traits.

Character traits are talking about a state of being, of virtues.

Credentials are boxes to check.

There's only a couple that come across as potentially a box to check, but again, I think as we take a closer look to it and we look at the context, they're clearly not boxes to check, but character traits.

Now, we've got to address the question here after we've addressed how we ought to view the list.

We've got to address the nagging question, you know, does one woman man or one wife husband mean never divorced or never remarried?

My short answer, for clarity's sake, is no.

I don't think that's what he's talking about here.

First off, why not say clearly, not divorced, not remarried?

Why use this somewhat strange phrase, the husband of one wife or a one-woman man, right?

Or the, yeah, husband of one wife or one-woman man.

Why not just say it clearly?

There is a word for divorce, there's a word for remarriage.

He uses it elsewhere when he's talking about remarriage, when he's talking about divorce, but for some reason he doesn't use it here.

The strongest case, though, for this not being necessarily about quantity of relationships, but quality, is that Paul allows for remarriage in 1 Corinthians 7, and he even encourages it later in this book.

So if you flip over to 1 Timothy 5, I'm not going to throw the verses up, like, for you to see the context.

If you flip over to 1 Timothy 5, 14...

we see Paul encouraging younger widows to remarry.

He said, so I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander.

So he's instructing young widows to be married here.

And then a little earlier, this instruction for remarriage is coming within the context of a broader discussion of which widows should the church financially support, right?

So Paul's trying to help the church get a little clarity on, yes, the church needs to financially support widows, but not all of them.

And he's talking about some of the criteria for

for which widows to support and which ones not to.

And he starts off this conversation in verse nine.

So if you look at chapter five, verse nine, he says, let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than 60 years of age, having been the wife of one husband.

So we have the same issue here.

So literally the wife of one husband is a one man woman, right?

So elders, one woman, man.

Here when we're talking about widows, Paul says that she's gotta be 60 or at least 60 and be a one man woman.

So same question, does this mean never divorced, never remarried, or does this mean a faithful, loyal woman?

I would argue that in here in chapter five, it's gotta mean the latter because why would Paul instruct young ladies to remarry if remarriage is bad or demonstrates a lack of self-control and would disqualify them from financial support from the church in the future?

He's saying church needs to support widows, but we want to support widows that are over 60, and he's saying who were faithful, loyal to their husbands, that demonstrated fidelity, that didn't end up in this position of husbandlessness because of loose living.

So saying that as opposed to never divorced, never remarried, because later he's instructing these young widows to remarry and to find another husband that will help support them and who will help continue, keep them busy, doing good work, right?

Instead of gossiping and some of the other sins that he talks about, which we'll talk about when we get to that chapter.

Right, so the question is, why would Paul instruct remarriage if it's gonna disqualify them from support, if it's a bad thing and it's gonna disqualify them from support down the road?

Again, I think it's pretty clear here that Paul's talking about character and quality of relationship in regards to these senior widows as opposed to mere quantity.

Not all divorce is equal.

I think Paul knows that, right?

Not all divorce is equal, not all remarriage is equal.

And also, a man could be technically married, right?

You can meet the credential of marriage and check the box and be flirtatious and make all the young ladies around him uncomfortable and would be clearly not a one-woman man, right?

Only a one-woman man in technicality.

So Paul says, we need to ask,

This is what I think he means by one woman, man, or if you really feel like we need to stick with a one wife, husband, what he means by that is what's the quality of his relationship right now, right?

Currently, what's the quality of his relationship?

If he's a divorced man, what were the circumstances of his divorce or even past acts of infidelity, especially if they were prior to him becoming a believer.

I think there's just a lot of criteria or a lot of circumstances that can go into each of these different cases that would maybe move the needle on whether or not that person is considered a one-woman man or not.

That's the long answer and that was only one of the list.

I'd be happy to talk more with you about this.

One, I'm more concerned with that we understand how we're approaching the list, right?

That we're approaching the list as not an arbitrary list, but a list that's meant to counter false teachers at the Church of Ephesus

and that in doing so, Paul's providing a list of character traits.

He's not providing a checkbox list of credentials.

So how about the rest of these characteristics?

How do they fit into that?

Well, Paul, the next three are sober-minded, self-controlled, and respectable.

The sense with these three, and we could take some time to unpack all three, but I'm just not this morning.

But the sense with these three is that an elder shouldn't come across as childish or a goof-off that doesn't take anything seriously.

Rather, he should demonstrate maturity and being able to rule himself.

This is what self-control means, to be able to rule oneself, rule your own body, and rule his own emotions well.

Proverbs 16.32 says, "'Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, "'and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.'"

Sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable.

Just side note, this is one of the reasons I kind of dress the way I do when I'm up here.

I don't wear khakis during the week when I come to work.

I'm usually in jeans, maybe a collared shirt type of thing.

But just in regards to being respectable,

especially to outsiders and stuff.

I mean, when people talk about sports and they talk about the news and stuff, they're in suits, right?

And they're talking about sports and the news.

I'm not wearing a suit right now, but I think we're talking about important stuff when we get together here.

So this is what I wear.

This is how I've interpreted that.

I know other people interpret it differently.

I think we want to avoid, though, just trying to be one of the guys up here when we're up front, right?

We are speaking on behalf of God.

We are speaking, trying to proclaim his word, and there's a certain level of respectability that ought to be portrayed when we do this.

So not trying to be a stiff, but at the same time, also just trying to portray

honor and respect to the office and to God's word.

Again, we're all gonna interpret that differently, so I'm not throwing shade at how anybody dresses here.

I think we do a pretty good job here of bringing honor and respect to God's word.

I'm just saying as far as the tone that we're trying to set moving forward, this is why.

All right, hospitable.

The next one, hospitable.

This word literally means love of strangers, right?

So loving strangers, showing love to strangers.

Elders on Sunday morning, right?

We ought to be leading the charge and looking for those who are new or who may be regular attenders, but for whatever reason seem to be feeling estranged or left out.

That's not an elder-only job, but we ought to be leading the charge on that.

And elders, we ought to be the first to open our homes

and welcome whoever God puts in our path, especially those we don't know well yet.

It's really easy for all of us to just gravitate to the people that we know, the people that are comfortable, the people that we don't have to, you know, maybe start off with small talk to get to know first.

We ought to, as elders, ought to be leading the charge and loving

Those who are strange, right, to us.

Not strange in general, but strange to us and getting to know them.

Able to teach is the only credential, right, on the list here.

It's the only skill-based qualification.

An elder ought to be able to teach the word in a group setting.

though some may be more inclined to speaking the truth and instructing in a counseling or discipleship setting than others, right?

So while we should be able to call on any of our elders to help teach a Sunday school or to preach in a pinch, that doesn't necessarily mean that they're the ones that want to do that all the time in that format.

They may be more inclined to teach

Again, in like a discipleship or counseling setting.

Not a drunkard.

Not gonna spend a lot of time on that.

I think that's pretty clear.

Not violent, but gentle.

This literally means not to be given to inflicting blows, right?

So I think another way to translate it is to like not be a brawler.

But I think blows, we all know, can be physical or verbal, right?

So solving problems through force, intimidation, whether it be yelling or physical, not to be known for that.

This could be,

Yeah, I already said that.

Also, so not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome.

Some people just love getting a rise out of other people and agitating other people.

That's not a good quality in an elder, right?

They're constantly picking online battles or they're constantly pushing people's buttons

There might be some virtue in that at some points, but not for an elder.

And the last one, not a lover of money.

You know, we often think of this in regards to how much we pay our pastors, which I think is a good consideration.

And then Paul actually talks about...

paid eldership or compensated eldership.

We'll talk about that when he talks about that.

But I think, you know, not a bad consideration here.

You don't want to pay your pastors so much that you're attracting greedy people to the office.

You also don't want to pay your pastors so little that money is a constant and distracting issue, right?

Love of money here or becoming a lover of money is a particular temptation for those who are rich and

and for those who are poor, right?

Because you've got to think about it all the time.

However, Os Guinness points out, and I think this is more to the point, if a man is drunk on wine, you'll throw him out, but if he's drunk on money, you'll make him a deacon.

You know?

Which is, I've seen it happen over and over again, right?

Love of money is subtle, it's common.

I think as Americans, we all struggle with it to a degree, whether we admit it or not.

And it's relatable, so we tend to excuse it, right?

We'll just say, he's successful, he knows how to run a business, let's have him run the church too, right?

Like he's obviously got some skill in that, let's have him help run the church.

Often what we label as competence and credentials, you know, the Bible calls love of self and money.

So it's not to say that all successful men are lovers of money, but if someone desires to be an elder, we've got to ask the question, like, how does he handle his money?

Is he willing to part with it?

Does he sacrifice everything or sacrifice important things to get it?

Important questions to ask.

So these are things that we're to look for as we observe the man desiring to be an elder, right?

But Paul also in this passage wants us to consider how other people view him, right?

So we're supposed to look at him and we're supposed to look at his list and be like, do I see him...

meeting these qualifications?

Do I see these virtues in him?

But Paul also wants us to consider how other people are viewing him and how other people are reacting to him.

So it's a pure office marked by personal virtue, but also public dignity.

So the first question that Paul asks is, how does his family view him?

Look at verses four and five.

I gotta flip back.

He must manage his own household well with all dignity, keeping his children submissive.

For if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?

So first, just like one woman, man, or one wife, husband, having a family is not necessarily a requirement or credential for being an elder here.

Just wanted to

reiterate that.

But second, I just want to note that the requirement is not that all of his kids and family are clearly born again, right?

He's talking about managing his household well and his children respecting him and his leadership role within the house.

Paul talks about primarily, again, management and leadership ability.

We all know that

No one can completely force another person to submit to our leadership and authority.

That has to be willingly given.

We can very strongly incentivize behaviors and very strongly disincentivize other behaviors, but the child or teen still has to, at some point, choose to submit.

The question here is, does this man serve his children in such a way with love and discipline?

that generally speaking, his kids willingly follow him and submit to his leadership, particularly when they're a part of his household.

So are they at some point willingly following him and submitting to his leadership?

The rationale being here,

is that if those who are closest to him find him insufferable and cannot respect his management and leadership or find it in themselves to respectfully disagree with him, then why would we assume he will care for and manage God's household any differently?

So there are times when we're butting heads with our kids.

There's times when we see things differently and it's not going smoothly and we're having fights.

But on average, right, on average, is there a willingness even through disagreement to submit to his leadership and the rules of his house and the management of his house?

Or is there just constant across the board rebellion and refusal to follow his leadership and submit to his leadership?

So how does his family view him?

Also, how does he view himself in verse six?

He must not be a recent convert or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil.

Well, the clear and practical command is that he shouldn't be a new convert.

So that's just like real clear, right?

Not a new convert.

But again, Paul gives the reason and the reason's pride.

A man puffed up with pride like Satan.

will likely succumb to the same sin as Satan, attempting to usurp God's authority, and in this case, God's authority over his own church, right?

Ultimately, the elders are not the one with carte blanche authority, were congregationally ruled, elder-led,

So there's that checks and balance there.

But ultimately, it's God who has final authority over his church, and he exercises that authority primarily through his word.

His word governs and guides our life together.

And someone who is new and puffed up with pride will be tempted to usurp that authority, the authority that the word has over them.

congregation and take it for himself.

You know recently I've seen some really scary reels of famous pastors of large churches talking about how they demand unquestioning loyalty to them and their wives.

I mean never would have thought you know those words would have come out of um

a pastor's mouth, a believer's mouth, really scary stuff.

And I've even heard pastors with big aspirations here in our area who have proudly spoken about how they've opposed majority opposition on their elder boards and how they've got them to fall in line with what they wanted to do and move forward.

I don't know all the details.

Maybe that's a good thing, maybe it's not.

But it makes me nervous, right?

It makes me nervous when we're talking about my way, our way, when we're ignoring the checks and balances of a plurality of elders, of the word of God, of the input of the congregation.

Pride within leadership is a real temptation, right?

And Paul points to New Conference here as a group of people to...

Even as just a hard and fast rule, no new converts because this is a real temptation.

All right, gotta move on.

How does he view himself?

How do outsiders view him?

He says, I don't, you know, in verse seven, he gives a similar format.

Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders so that they may not fall into disgrace into the snare of the devil.

Don't have time to unpack all of this, but another way to word this sentence would be that he needs to shine the beauty of the gospel to outsiders so that he and the church's ministry are not limited by the devil.

I think it's another way to paraphrase that.

He needs to shine the beauty of the gospel to outsiders so that he and the church's ministry are not limited or ensnared by the devil.

All right, so what?

Trav, Mike, Scott, Drew, myself, we talked about this.

I talked about this a lot when I first came here.

We've reiterated it usually at least once every six months or so.

But our job description is first and foremost, being before doing.

What we do, the programs we run, the help that we give people, all the good stuff that we do as an elder board is secondary to being.

And our job is first and foremost to lead by example, to continue to grow in godly character, especially in how we lead our families.

Families come first because if we're not leading well at home, we're disqualified from doing the job here, right?

So in no way can the job here come before our responsibility to our families.

You know, if you look at the qualifications again, it's actually a pretty low bar.

If you look at them really closely, there's really nothing uniquely Christian about any of these qualifications.

It's just being a good, decent human being.

But genuinely and beautifully being all of them

from the heart is only possible through being born again and indwelt by the Holy Spirit and walking with him on a daily basis.

We can posture this stuff on for a time, but it won't last for long.

In order to be this and to grow in this for a lifetime and for the long haul, we need to be born again and we need to be walking with God through the power of the Spirit.

Men, Paul says to aspire to this, right?

That you desire a beautiful work, right?

There's nothing better and more beautiful than this, right?

We're doing this work as we lead our families.

We're doing this for our families on behalf of our families.

And there's a lot of beauty and goodness in doing this for the family of God as well.

So out of all of the things that we aspire to,

In this life, it's all gonna fade.

It's all gonna pass away.

But the lives that we impact for eternity will go on.

And by God's grace, we'll go on for eternity.

Kent Hughes says, we need to see leadership as a calling.

Church leadership is not a political position to be sought for oneself.

It's a burden that some must accept.

Leaders are not determined by popularity.

They must be the kind of men profiled here by Paul and Timothy.

We must determine to prepare, and this we is the congregation, right?

As we choose elders, as we vote on elders each year, as we vote to reaffirm elders and call new elders, we must determine to prepare and equip such leaders.

You know, Christ bore the burden of our sin in his body on the tree so that he might lead us into God's presence, restored and made whole.

Men, we need to be led and we need to be served by Christ in that way.

And then as we're served by him, we humbly serve and lead those around us, especially our families and the household of God.

This is something we're all called to do, regardless of the situation that God has put us in.

And God has put some of us in for this time and this moment to lead both our families and the household of God.

And yeah, I think we feel this and hear this in that context and in a particular way as well.

It's a heavy message.

Sometimes I run up here to give you God's word and I'm super excited.

And then there's other weeks like last week and this week where we're hearing from God and he's shaping our life together.

But it's also, there is a burden and a weight

that's involved with the things that God has called us to do.

And it's only by his grace that we sang about earlier that we are able to do that and that he sustains us while we walk faithfully with him.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, this is your church.

You have made us your people.

And Lord, you have set the design for how your church ought to operate.

And Lord, I'm just very grateful this morning that you call and equip men to lead your church, that you're doing that work.

And Lord, we trust that you sustain the men that you call and equip to lead your church as they lead.

And Lord, I just ask now that you would call and equip more men to join the elder board and to lead your people and to serve your people.

And Lord, I just pray for all of the men of this church, whether they be single, divorced, Lord, or currently with families, and even currently on the elder board, Lord, I just pray that you would work all of these virtues, all of these character traits in us, and that you would grow them in us as we fix our eyes on Jesus, who

served us with all of these character traits perfectly.

And Lord, I pray that you would help us to see the beauty of Christ and as we see him, to become more like him.

Pray all this in Jesus' name, amen.