Titus 1:5-9
(Elders - Part 1)

Announcements:

- *New Here lunch* / *Creative meeting* / *Event TV's* ***(all today…)***
- ***Africa, delay*** ***Systems of this world*** *(microsoft/FAA) get shaken, people* ***look for an anchor!***
- *Baby dedication* - 11:30am service… ***Shaylor and Devin*** Tillmam
  - Child's Name: ***Kit Tillman & Fennec Tillman*** (2.5 years old)

Please open to **Titus Chapter 1** ***(Need a Bible? … Near the "T's")***

- *Last time*: ***Paul, Titus, Crete, "set in order" things that are lacking… (v. 5) (epidiortho!)***
- *This time*: **How?**: ***Appoint elders in every city***. *(not committees, programs, strategies)*, but very simply ***a group of godly mature leaders!*** *(peek ahead to v. 10-16 =* ***not easy ministry!****)*
  - **Elders, in two parts:**
  - **Next Week's Title: The *Character* of an Elder *(qualities; characteristics (vv. 6-9))***
  - **This Week's Title**: **The *Office* of an Elder *(a deep dive study… (v. 5))***

(All on one slide please)

- **The History**
- **The Titles**
- **The Structure**
- **The Work**
- **The Call**

In general ***"what is an elder…"*** **Could you define it**? Grey beard? Back room mtg? Mormons?

- What about ***"at our church in particular…"*** **Could you define it**?
- Been in ***deep study behind the scenes*** lately with a group of guys and *hope to bring clarity.*

Imagine **a church without elders**…

- *Who protects the doctrine or confronts error before it spreads?*
- *Who is prudent over the resources and care of people?*
- ***That was Crete****… the best way to ortho what was lacking* = ***godly shepherds to lead & care!***

Let's look at Paul's word's to Titus on the matter…

- **Read Titus 1:5-9, PRAY**

The History

Old Testament Elders ***(word study in next section...)***

*Exodus 3:16 - "****Go and gather the elders of Israel*** *together, and say to them… 'I have surely visited you and seen what is done to you in Egypt…'"* ***(first mention of Israel's elders!)***

Later on… ***Jethro recognizes*** Moses can't do it all himself *(Moses appoints "****rulers****") (Exodus 18)*

- ***Pragmatism!*** ***Wise, experienced, men of understanding… (Deut. 1:13-15)***

A little later on… (prepping for The Promised Land)

Numbers 11:16-17, ESV - "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Gather for me ***seventy men of the elders of Israel****, whom you know to be the elders of the people… and I will take some of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them, and* ***they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you may not bear it yourself alone."*** ***(too many people for one shepherd to bear alone… (complaints piling!)***

- **A reality for a growing ministry**… *(pragmatism, capacity, availability, burn out, scalability)*

Skipping ahead a few hundred years…

- ***Kings*** *(David anointed by elders (2 Sam 5:3), Solomon gathers to bring ark (1 Kings 8)*
- ***During the exile…*** *(community still looked to them (Ez 8:1, 14:1, 20:1)* ***- thread remains…***

Second Temple Jewish background ***(development of "synagogues & local town - elders")***

Luke 7:1-3 - "[Jesus] entered Capernaum… a certain centurion's servant… was sick and ready to die. So when he heard about Jesus, ***he sent elders of the Jews to Him****, pleading with Him to come and heal his servant."* ***implies local elders of Capernaum likely connected to local synagogue (v. 5)***

Acts 13:14-15 - "And on the Sabbath day [Paul and Barnabas] went into the synagogue and sat down. After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, ***the rulers of the synagogue (archisynagogos)*** *sent a message to them…" (****plurality*** *= multiple leaders of a synagogue in* ***a couple*** *usages) here + Mark 5*

Luke 13:14 - "But **the ruler of the synagogue** *answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath…" (****singular*** *= a true head? (****singular is more common****)*

Image of the Theodotus inscription

- **Time of Herod** (***before 70 AD***). Mentioned ***Theodotus*** as the "***Archisynagogos***" and *also his father & grandfather* served in the same capacity *(supporting a* ***prominent elder-like*** *figure)*

Israel's national elders ***(at large)*** ***rejected Christ…***

- *Luke 9:22 & Mark 14:53 - "The Son of Man must suffer many things,* ***and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and scribes****, and be killed, and be raised the third day… they led Jesus away to the high priest; and with him were* ***assembled all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes."*** *(****Sanhedrin****)* …though ***some elders*** ***(Nicodemus/Joseph of Arimathea)*** and ***local synagogue rulers*** ***(like Jairus)*** sought Him and believed in Him…

New Testament Elders ***(in regards to the "ekklesia")***

Acts 11:29-30 - "the disciples… determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea [because of a great famine]… ***sent it to the elders*** *by the hands of Barnabas and Saul."* ***(first mention! plural)***

Acts 14:21-23 - "[Paul and Barnabas]... returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith… so when they had ***appointed elders in every church****, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed."*

- ***Clearly,*** ***each church*** *in those cities received* ***multiple elders****…*

*Acts 15:2, CSB - "After Paul and Barnabas had engaged them in serious argument and debate, Paul and Barnabas and some others were appointed to go up to the apostles **and elders in Jerusalem** about this issue." (by this time it's clear there were a **plurality of elders at the church in Jerusalem**)*

- ***Though James seemed to stand out as a chief among equals there…***

Our immediate text…

*Titus 1:5 - "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and **appoint elders in every city**…" (**town by town**, somewhat similar to synagogues… maybe?)*

(All on one slide please)

- ***Israel:** national, tribal, local, synagogal…*
- ***Church:** plurality listed in each church (elders and deacons) - sometimes with a key name…*
  - *James, John, Peter, Titus, Timothy, (possibly Archippus and Epaphras)*
- ***2nd/3rd Century:** Ignatius/Cyprian describe three (w/ **bishops over** elders and deacons)*
- ***4th+ Century:** practices of a regional lead bishop expand… (Nicaea, 325 formalizes)*
  - ***Jerome** (387AD) questions **rank** of the bishop…**(argues custom, not scripture)***
- ***Middle Ages:** pope claims authority over the whole church (1075, 1302)*
- ***1500s:** some Reformers give a call to go back to plurality of elders (Martin Bucer; John Calvin)*
  - ***Calvin** (1 Tim 5:17) **two kinds of elders**: doctrinal teaching pastors / ruling lay elders…*
  - ***More on this in a bit…***

Throughout historical Scripture, ***God entrusts recognized leaders*** with ***responsibility for His people.***

- Shepherding God's people was **never designed to be a one-man show**.
- When it becomes one, the ***shepherd burns out*** and the ***sheep get neglected** (Acts 6)*
- A *plurality of godly leaders* at *a local church* is ***God's grace to both shepherds & sheep***….

The Titles

Zaqen** (Hebrew) - "old, aged, mature" (related to the word for "**beard**") - universal, **tribal customary!

- *Proverbs 31:23 - "Her husband is known in the gates, **when he sits among the elders (zaqen) of the land.**" (when he hangs with the **other bearded fellars!** **(gandalf)** **hahaha…**)*
- **You get the idea**: *guys who have **walked a little road**… (life's experiences)*

***Presbyteros** (elder) - "an older man; a member of Sanhedrin; those who manage the affairs of a city; leaders of churches" (that's the word used in **Titus 1:5**)*

Episkopos** (overseer/bishop) - "one who manages or oversees; a superintendent charged with a duty of seeing things are done rightly" (similar to "one who rules" (**proistemi**)) **- you rule dude! ("leads")

- *(that's the word used in **Titus 1:7** (**bishop** / **overseer**) **- connecting the two…**)*
- **A father** ***(proistemi)*** is a *Protector/Provider (one who **rules/leads** his own house well (1 Tim 3)*

***Poimen** (shepherd/pastor) - "a herdsman of animals; he to whose care and control others have committed themselves; presiding officer, manager, director of an assembly"*

- ***Pastor** (latin) from '**Pascere**' "to feed" or "graze a flock" …related to "**pasture**" **(John 21)***
- *Eph. 4:11 - "And He [Christ] Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, **and some pastors (poimen)** and teachers…" - pastors/teachers connected*

***Christ* is the ultimate model embodying all…**
1 Peter 2:25 - "For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned ***to the Shepherd (poimen) and Overseer (episkopos) of your souls."*** *(**Shepherd, king, Lord, priest, prophet, pastor!**)*

***Presbyteros** (elder), **Episkopos** (overseer), **Poimen** (shepherd) = Same office, different functions…*

- Showing **nuances of the same work**; You could say an ***"elder"*** describes ***who he is***; and ***shepherding & overseeing*** describes ***what he does…***

1 Peter 5:1-2, ESV - "I exhort ***the elders (presbyteros)*** *among you…* ***shepherd (poimaino)*** *the flock of God that is among you,* ***exercising oversight (episkopeo)****…"* ***(Acts 20 uses all three as well…)***

The Structure

Churches vary, and you all may have even ***formulated ideas/opinions*** already as well.

Phil. 1:1 - "To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, ***with the overseers and deacons…****"*

- **Clearly the church needs both**. *Equal in value*, but based on *callings, personalities, giftings*.
- **May not use those terms** ***(leaders, servants, directors, etc…)***

I would go as far as saying… that all **Christians agree**: ***churches need leadership structures***, but they **differ in how** that ***authority is distributed*** or how those ***leaders function***….

(All on one slide please)* - *will be very brief…

- ***Congregational*** *- the church votes, the 'elders' carry out the decisions of the body… (baptist)*
- ***Pastor-led (single)*** *- one shepherd leads local church, w/ support (nondenom, calvary chapel)*
  - **Currently fall under this style**… ***(heavy elder involvement; w/ chief among equals)***
- ***Elder-led (plural)*** *- team of elders lead the local church together with equal authority (reformed)*
- ***Elder-ruled (presbyterian)*** *- elders govern, accountable to regional/national bodies (reformed)*
- ***Bishop-led (episcopal)*** *- bishops oversee regions of churches; local clergy serve under them (catholic/orthodox/methodist/anglican)*
  - ****Various blends of all occur in many forms** (Lutheran (bishop/congregational))*
- What I learned is that the ***structure matters***, but the **quality of men in it matters more**.
  - ***There's opportunity for disaster in any structure… (and testimonies of each)***
  - ***No structure above can* make up for ungodly leaders… *(that's part 2 next time)***

The Work

Holiness & Responsibility

*Acts 20:28, NLT - "**Guard yourselves** and God's people. Feed and shepherd **God's flock—his church**, purchased with his own blood…"* ***Massive responsibility*** *(**stricter judgment** (James 3:1))*

And, because of that, massive attacks will come… (spiritual warfare!)
1 Timothy 5:19 - "Do not receive ***an accusation against an elder*** *except from two or three witnesses."*

- *(Deut 19:15 - dealing with* ***a formal charge****)* ***- sometimes it is warranted (investigation)***

    - *V. 20 - **those who are sinning rebuke** in the presence of all…*
- Elders need to live *"**blameless and above reproach**"* so as **not to give a reason** ***(next time)***.
- *Heavily **scrutinized/criticized**… (public position; fishbowl microscope; correcting errors; hard decisions; could never please the masses - **all that creates critics** - rumors, slander, etc…)*

Correct & Protect

Acts 20:28-31, NLT - "Guard yourselves and God's people… [for] I know that false teachers, like vicious wolves, will come in among you after I leave, not sparing the flock. Even some men from your own group will rise up and distort the truth in order to draw a following. Watch out!" Remember the three years I was with you—my constant watch and care over you night and day, and my many tears for you…"

- ***Tears:*** **of all forms**… ***(grief, trauma, sin, rebellion, compromise, division, heresy…)***
    - ***Context:*** ***specifically guarding against false doctrine within and without…***

Leadership & Teaching

*1 Timothy 5:17 - "Let the **elders who rule well** be counted worthy of double honor, **especially those who labor in the word and doctrine**." (you see that in the **Jerusalem council with James**)*

- ***Honor**, **in context** of **widows** (vv. 3-16)* = **respect & provision** ***(compensation)***
- ***Double**, **in context*** = **ample or generous** ***(of course, not to be abused either…)***
- ***Especially** (**malista** "chiefly/above all")* + ***Labor** (**kopiao** "wearisome effort and toil")*
- Supports the idea of **a main teacher** among a church ***worthy of dedicating his life to it.***
- Also, that ***some elders may stand out as distinct leaders*** and/or ***teachers*** (**giftedness**)

Care & Prudence

*Acts 11:29-30 - "the disciples… determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea [because of a great famine]… **sent it to the elders** by the hands of Barnabas and Saul."* ***(stewardship/prudence)***

*James 5:14 - "Is anyone among you sick? Let him **call for the elders of the church**, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord…"* ***(compassion/care)***

- **regular for our team** ***- often up front*** ***(w/ prayer team)*** - *deepest ministry **not on a stage!***
- ***Availability** and **sacrifice**…* *(scale with size of flock)*

David wrote, *"Your **rod** and Your **staff**, they comfort me" (Psalm 23:4).* ***A shepherd carries both!***

The Call

The Spirit calls; the man desires; the church appoints; and then… the elder serves!

The Spirit Calls:

*Acts 20:28 - "[addressing the ephesian 'elders'] …take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which **the Holy Spirit has made you overseers**…" (**qualifications** are not enough; **many meet them**)*

*Acts 13:2-3 - "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, **the Holy Spirit said**, 'Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work **to which I have called them.**' Then, having fasted and prayed, [they] laid hands on them…"* ***Context = missionaries… (fasting/praying emphasized) - Acts 14:23 also***

- *Acts 14:23 - "...they had appointed elders in every church, **and prayed with fasting**, they commended them to the Lord…"*
- *Names of men* will begin to ***bubble to the surface*** **as the Spirit leads…**
  - *(not just **"business" or a "corporation"**)*

The Man Desires:

*1 Timothy 3:1, CSB - "This saying is trustworthy: "If anyone **aspires** to be an overseer, he **desires** a noble work."*

- ***A noble task***, **not an easy one**. In fact, ***extremely difficult!*** ***(1 Tim 3 - false teaching…)***
  - *"Do not enter the ministry if you can help it…" (Spurgeon) (content? Go his way…)*
- **If people only knew** behind the scenes ***(on call)***, ***many would NOT desire*** *(let first be tested)*
- **Aspiring & desiring** ***(two different greek words)***
- ***Desiring*** (***epithymeo***) - how it begins… a **love/burden for the church**. ***To help God's people!***
  - ***Desire*** must be prayed through… ***(platform, status, title?) - godly ambition?***
- ***Aspiring*** (***orego***) *"to stretch one's self towards; reach after"* ***(putting in a place!) - start now***
  - *Have the desire? …then **aspire**!* Serve ***regularly/consistently***. ***All services/events***.
  - *"**Faithful with little** = entrusted with much" (Luke 16:10) - recognized before appointed!*

The Elder Appointed:

*Titus 1:5 - "**appoint** elders in every city as I commanded you…"*

- ***Kathistemi*** *- "to officially appoint or set in place over a thing; to administer an office"*
- ***But who does the appointing and how…?***
- *Acts 6:3 - "Therefore, brethren, **seek out (select) from among you** seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, **whom we may appoint (Kathistemi)** over this business…" Dealing with the **idea of deacons;** Jerusalem selected, but **Apostles appointed**…*

*Titus 1:5 - "appoint elders in every city **as I commanded you**…" (**diatasso**: arranged; prescribed…)*

- It is **a clear and commanded practice** in the N.T. to *appoint elders over individual churches*
- *In many N.T. cases* with elders it's **not clear who appoints them**; it just says they are there...
- But in some clear N.T scenarios, **church leaders are the ones appointing church leaders** ***(elders)***: ***Paul & Barnabas, Titus, Timothy, etc… (Apostles or Apostolic delegates…)***
- *I believe churches today* should **try to follow that pattern** as best as we can ***(leaders appointing leaders by: praying, fasting, laying hands and commending to the Lord…)***
- ***(elder study)*** Likely **three responses to an appointment**:
  - ***huh, really, that guy?***
  - ***Yeah, I see it!***
    Or who's that? (should be rare…) from those ***"involved"*** (as opposed to ***uninvolved***)

It may start w/ *a guy in his living room* or *a Gospel work*, but then *(Acts 14, Titus 1)* = ***structure time!***

The Leader Serves:

*1 Peter 5:1-3, ESV - "**I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness** of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight [serving as overseers], not under compulsion, but willingly… not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock…." **(a lot of this ties to the qualities we will look at next time…)***

- ***Willingly**, **Eagerly**, and **as examples to the flock** (humility, love, service…)*

Closing:

And, the most important part of it all…

*1 Peter 5:4, ESV - "And **when the chief Shepherd (archipoimen) appears**, you will receive the unfading crown of glory…" **(archipoimen - only time used! …Christ is the Senior Pastor!)***

- He is ***head of the church***. He ***purchased the flock with His blood***.
- ***We all report to Him and Elders must give account… (and be rewarded for faithfulness)***

Next week… **The *Character* of an Elder** ***(qualities; characteristics (vv. 6-9))***

In the meantime… ***(how should you "as the church" all respond?)***

- **Men, prayerfully consider the call** *(God could have that for a select few of you, someday…)*
- **Honor and pray for your church leaders**
- *Hebrews 13:17-18, CSB - "**Obey your leaders and submit to them**, since they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account, so that they can do this with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you. **Pray for us**, for we are convinced that we have a clear conscience, wanting to conduct ourselves honorably in everything…"*
  - *Encourage* your church leaders, often. *Don't be nit-picky*. *(with **joy** and **not grief**)*
  - And ***pray for them*** regularly by name. ***Most of the ministry, you never hear about…***
- *1 Thess. 5:12-13, CSB - "Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to **give recognition to those who labor among you and lead you** in the Lord and admonish you, and to regard them very highly in love because of their work" (not undermining; receiving correction; show appreciation)*
  - *And, again as above*… **that chapter closes** with: ***"Brethren, pray for us" (v. 25)***

PRAY *- specifically **by name**, and even **broader than our own** fellowship…*