

Church Life

I. Slide1-3 Announce:

II. Slide4a Intro:

A. This is about **Church Life**. It's about *how to do Church Together*.

1. May I say, what I'm encouraged about is this **1st church of Crete** was **messed up**. I'm not rejoicing in that fact, I'm just thankful that we get to learn from their mistakes.
2. Slide4b It's about how to **excel spiritually** as a **church** family.
 - a) Which Paul ties to **excelling spiritually** in **your own family**.
And, excelling spiritually in **your business life**, *And* in **your work life**.
3. To **oversee a church** you want to **choose leaders** who **can & are** doing it at **home &** at their **job**.
4. But Paul doesn't **stop** there with just **church leadership**, **but**...it properly **starts** there.
 - a) Paul will talk about **men/women, young/old**, revealing **each** have their **vital functions** to fulfill **in the church**.
 - b) **In a nutshell**, CM must be **living examples** of what we **believe**. Paul will display **good works** as **desirable & profitable** for **all** believers.

B. Book Overview: **Love** what is Good. **Teach** what is Good. **Do** what is Good.

C. Why is this book important to **ALL** of us?

1. **Because** some of you might go on the mission field, or plant a church, or be in church leadership.
2. **Because** the church should be important to you, it's Jesus his bride.
3. **Because** most church problems come back to this issue of **failure in leadership**.
4. **Because** everything in this list of qualifications about elders, pertains to **every Christian**. (even able to **give instruction in sound doctrine**, is **discipleship**)

- a) So this shouldn't be only relegated to *an elite group* (like the Navy SEALs of the church). See it as a profile of Jesus.
- b) Every dad is a pastor of his kids. Everyone should aspire to be a leader.
- c) And if you are a single lady, this is who you want to marry. You should want to marry a pastor (not nec the office of the pastor, but of the character of a pastor). Teach that to your younger daughters, *marry this guy here!*
- d) What lady wouldn't want to marry a *hospitable, self-controlled, one woman guy, who is a lover of good?*

5. So we should all be *praying through each of these areas of your own life.*

D. This book is about *Renovating the Church* (not the building, the people).

E. A Good Church isn't about having *a good preacher, good worship team, and a good website*. It's about qualified leaders and sound doctrine.

1. Churches usually fail/fall because of a problem in church leadership.

III. Slide5 BOOK INTRO (1-4)

A. Typical 1st cent letter writing style: Names the source (Paul).

Names the recipient (Titus), & then pronounces a blessing upon him.

B. (1) Great combo: Bondservant/Apostle. Humility: *God's slave*. Calling: *God's spokesman*.

C. Slide6a Notice truth leads to godliness (nlt) *I have been sent to proclaim faith to those God has chosen & to teach them to know the truth that shows them how to live godly lives.*

1. Beliefs determine your behavior.

2. "*Theology leads to biography*" (If you want to know what will be written about your life, just ask yourself, *what am I believing?*)

D. Slide6b (2) God who cannot lie/lit. *the unlying God* - Yep, there are things God can't do.

1. God can't get tired. God can't be unholy. God can't be prejudiced. God can't break a promise. God can't remember sins He's chosen to forget (actually, God can't *forget*, but it means He chooses to not hold you

accountable for, or re-judge you for). God can't abandon you. God can't stop **thinking** about you. God can't stop **loving** you.

E. Slide6c God who cannot lie *promised* - (promised what? *hope of eternal life*)

1. **Faith** is recognizing God's *promises* as actual **fact**, **believing** it is true, **rejoicing** in the knowledge of that truth, **and then** simply **resting** because God said it.
2. **Faith** turns **promises** into *prophecy*.
3. **Faith** does not say, "I see this is good for me; therefore God must have *sent it*." **Instead**, **faith** declares, "God sent it; therefore it must be good for me."
 a) Slide7a ***Faith**, when walking through the dark with God, only asks Him to hold his hand more tightly.* Phillips Brooks
4. God, *the guardian of truth*, cannot lie about this *hope of eternal life*.
 a) Because **He** can't speak a lie, **His words** can always be **trusted**.
 b) Since **all of Scripture** is spoken by God, **all of Scripture** must be "*unlying*".
 c) Slide7b That might sound like **too simplistic** of an argument, **but** that what Paul uses here. "*The Bible is God's words. God never lies. Therefore the Bible never lies.*"¹
5. **Also note** for later, Cretans were known for being **liars** (12).

F. (4) **Pastor Titus** was a Greek. Paul won him to Christ (vs.4 **a true son**, obviously *spiritually* speaking). **And then** enlisted in service by Paul.

1. He became one of Paul's close assistants & was sent to the churches to represent the apostle. **On Paul's 3rd missionary trip, he left Titus in Crete to pastor there.**

G. We'll see next week, apparently the saints on Crete were better at **professing** the faith **than practicing** it.

¹ Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, pg.82

H. Titus is advised on how to deal with 2 categories of people: **Leaders in the church** (5-9)...**next week**, **Legalists in the church** (10-16).

IV. Slide8 **ORDER AND APPOINT (5-9) READ**

A. We do not know who *founded* the church in Crete, **but** we do know that Paul *left Titus there to organize it and deal with the mess.*

B. (5) **Key scripture:** When an infant church grows up it needs **structure & guidance.**

1. **Structure: Set in order** (we'll see what gets set in order in vs.10-16)

a) The church body suffers when we **avoid facing & solving** serious problems.

b) As long as Christians are in this body of flesh, there *will be* problems in our churches.

c) **Not if but when** these problems arise, the answer is not to hide them, or for officers to resign and find a new church. The answer is to face them **honestly and prayerfully and settle them** according to *the Word of God.*

(1) **Slide9a So what do you need to Set in Order?** in your **physical life?** in your **spiritual life?** in your **emotional life?** in your **marriage?** in your **dating relationship?** in your **business practices?** in your **school life?** in your **thought life?**

(2) **Slide9b What needs to be set in order at CM?** Actually a lot, that we're working on w/our whole staff. **We're looking at our next years budget (fiscal/July).** Your tithes, God's \$. Our accountability. Looking at all job descriptions, time spent, holes we need to fill (**paid vs. volunteer**). We always are. Won't stop. *above reproach.*

2. **Guidance: Appoint elders** (we'll see in vs. 6-9) [**This is what needs to be set in order in our church...**elders/deacons]

a) **Note:** *Elder, overseer*, pastor, shepherd, bishop = all the same. **Jesus is the chief Shepherd** (the true Senior Pastor), **we are all under shepherds.**

C. **Slide10a Crete** 5th largest islands in Med, 160m long, 37m wide (TJ/Malibu. 8 **Catalinas**)

D. **Note:** 3 basic areas of requirement for *prospective elders*. [**may this also be a prayer list for your church leadership team*]

1. **Slide10b BLAMELESS IN RELATIONSHIPS** (6) *marriage and family*

- a) (lit.) *a one woman man*.
- b) As per our **marriages**, you can't say, *I want a personal relationship w/God, but not a covenant relationship w/Him*. **God** only relates in terms of covenant. **And** any serious relationship, *like marriage*, does the same.
- c) As per our **children**, they should be **believing**/actually faithful **children** – if the elder is capable of influencing his own children *toward Christ* with effective spiritual leadership, **that** suggests the same probability of effective leadership in the church.
 - (1) **Doesn't mean** that leadership children/young adults have to be **perfect**. We as leadership families all go through different **seasons** of our lives. **But** as you are choosing *prospective elders* look for men who have their **home life & business life** in order.

2. **Slide10c BLAMELESS IN CONDUCT** (7,8) *personality and character traits*

- a) **5 Temptations:** *pride, temper, drink, power, money*.
- b) **above reproach**/blameless – **Philip Towner explained it best, “blameless is more a measure of wholeness & balance than of perfection. The code examines all dimensions of life for evidence of the Spirit’s influence in each part. This kind of balanced reading means development toward maturity is under way. And Paul felt that whole believers were best suited for church leadership.”²*
- c) **Steward** – a **manager** of a household or family.
 - (1) Your leadership has **a higher accountability**.
 - (2) *The higher your responsibility the higher your accountability* (i.e. a police officer. A judge. A school teacher)

² IVP N.T. Commentary Series

(3) Who cares if a pastor is a great communicator if his **home life** or **lifestyle** is a joke?

3. Slide10d HOLD FIRM TO THE WORD (9)

a) **Sound doctrine** - *hygiene (gk), healthy, whole doctrine*. Teaching that contributes to the sp health of the church.

(1) **Just as** a **physician** must attack **infection & disease**, **so** local church leaders must **attack false doctrine**.

(2) Slide10e What a great & natural **segue** from upholding sound doctrine, **to** those who don't.

E. Slide11 (9) *msg knowing how to use the **truth** to either spur people on in knowledge or stop them in their tracks if they oppose it.* [figure out: what is true & not true]

1. **An elder** is a **guardian or protector** of the truth.
2. One who must **understand it, hold it fast**.
3. **Encourage** others by **teaching it**. **Refute** those who **oppose it**.
4. He must be **a capable handler** of the truth.

F. Keywords: church, covenant, faith. hope, marriage, truth.