

Sermon Notes

WORSHIP SERVICE -

10.15.2023

PART 32 - EXHORTATION TO ELDERS - ELDER ORDINATION

I. INTRODUCTION

1 Peter 5:1-4

So 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: **2** shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; **3** not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. **4** And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. **5** Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

II. AN ELDER'S RESPONSIBILITY

- Paul instructed Titus to bring to completion the work that had been started by the apostle in Crete. He was told to “put what remained into order” and that meant appointing elders in every town which had a church.
- Appointing elders was not a new idea or concept, we see elders very early in the foundation of the Church as the Spirit birthed new believers, disciples were made, and churches started.
- Acts 11 we see the Jerusalem church having a plurality of elders.
- Acts 14 we see the apostles appointing elders in every church.
- God intended for the local church to have elders, pastors, and overseers.
- Elders in every church was the apostolic imperative.
- “So I exhort the elders among you...”
- The term elder is used interchangeably with overseer and pastor/shepherd.
- 1 Timothy 3:1, “...If anyone aspires to the office of overseer...”
- The word used for “overseer” is the Greek word, “episkopē” (ἐπίσκοπή) and means, position, assignment, supervision.
- It’s a position of leadership in the church with a set of tasks and responsibilities.

- In Titus and in our passage, the word “elder” is used. That is the Greek Word “presbyteros (πρεσβύτερος)” which is a term used to speak of leadership or seniority.
 - The term shepherd or pastor, which Peter uses in our passage, means to “tend” or “care” for the flock of God.
 - We can say from these passages that the title or position is elder and their function or role is overseeing by shepherding God’s people.
 - Peter refers to himself as a “fellow elder”. He is exhibiting and modeling the very thing that he is going to require of them.
 - We can also see that these men, the elders, are “among you.” These were men appointed from within the local church.
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- 2 shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight,
 - The elder shepherds the flock of God.
 - The way the elders shepherds is by “exercising oversight.
 - That is by leading, guiding, superintending.
 - The elder leads through pastoral oversight (leading, feeding, caring, protecting).
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- Paul heavily emphasizes the character of the elder in his letters.
 - Peter, in his letter, is concerned with the motives and attitudes, the manner in which an elder oversees the flock of God.
 - Both of these things are critical. The character and the motivations of the person who would exercise oversight over the flock of God is extremely important.

PROPER MOTIVATIONS

- Elders must exercise oversight, “not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; 3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.”
 - He states the negative motivation or attitude and then states the positive motivation or attitude by which the elder is to operate.
 - Sam Storms commenting on this passage summarizes these negative motivations as the “love of praise, love of profit, and love of power.”
 - Having the right character is necessary in appointing a man who will in turn, have the right motivations for being appointed to the office of overseer.
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- “Not under compulsion but willingly as God would have you.”
 - No one should be forced, coerced, manipulated, or pressured into this position who does not want it.
 - They should enter into it voluntarily, with a God-driven motivation.
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- “Not for shameful gain, but eagerly.”
 - An elder must not have the attitude of a hireling. They aren’t doing this for the money.
 - They serve eagerly, zealously, readily, and enthusiastically.
 - The eager elder is driven by one thing alone, serving the Chief Shepherd by serving his sheep.
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- “Not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.”
 - No one should serve as an elder who is hungry for power and position.
 - The elder must be an example to the flock by exemplifying the godly characteristics of a true Christ-follower.
 - The Chief Shepherd is the only Lord and Master.

GOD'S FLOCK

- Acts 20:28 Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.
 - Elders must watch over their own lives and the lives of all the flock.
 - Remembering that they were given that charge by the Holy Spirit, it is he who has made them overseers.
 - For what purpose? To care for the church of God. It's not their church, it's God's church. He is the Chief Shepherd.
 - He purchased his people with his own blood.
 - An elder is not free to lead the church however they want.
 - Elders are under shepherds. They answer to the Chief Shepherd and will have to give account to him.
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- The elder does not serve for the praise of men, though they should be honored.
 - The elder does not serve for financial profit, though Scripture says those that labor in preaching and teaching should be taken care of.
 - The elder does not serve so they can tell people what to do and control them, though they have been given charge by the Lord over a portion of his flock they must oversee.
 - But the heart and character and motivation of an elder must be so inclined to Christ to keep them from inflicting harm on the sheep.

III. AN ELDER'S REWARD AND THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE

- Elders need encouragement and motivation.
 - The task is not an easy one and pastors deal continually with discouragement in ministry.
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- What can motivate an elder to keep pressing on and giving themselves sacrificially for the care of God's people, and do it willingly, and cheerfully, and eagerly? The promise of glory.
 - 4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.
 - Following Christ is costly. Christian service is unglamorous, tiresome, wearying and it is exhausting mentally, emotionally, and physically.
 - But at the coming of our Lord, the Chief Shepherd whom we serve, there is glory awaiting us.
 - For the elder, all the labor, sacrifices, and hardships of pastoral life, all of the difficulty faced serving the flock of God, all that went unnoticed and under appreciated by others will be recognized and rewarded at the triumphant return of the Chief Shepherd.
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- But that promise is also for every faithful believer. Through all of the hardships in the Christian life, we can look confidently towards the appearing of the Chief Shepherd, and the unfading crown of glory that is promised to us.
 - The Day of Victory is coming!

THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE TO THE ELDER'S MINISTRY

- How should we respond to the charge given to elders who are tasked with the spiritual oversight of the flock of God?

- 5 Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”
- The response is to be subject to the elders. To joyfully and willingly submit to their shepherding responsibility.
- Now he is singling out the young men because they are the ones most likely to conflict and disagree with their elders.
- But this exhortation extends to the whole body, be subject to the elders.
- Hebrews 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.
- Pray for you pastors. Unlike Christ, we are not perfect. We will fall short. We will fail you.
- But the Chief Shepherd will not fail you. Peter not only calls Christ the Chief Shepherd, but also the Overseer of our souls (1 Peter 2:25).
- Here is the overriding principle, how elders and those in their charge can do all of this joyfully.
- 5 Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another
- If we all put on the clothing of humility, this beautiful harmony of unity, humility and mutual submission under the Chief Shepherd, causes the church to flourish for the glory of God, adorning the gospel of our Lord and is a powerful witness to the world.

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?