

Introduction: The Historic Leadership of God's People

- In the OT, certain groups of leaders were set apart in Israel in order that the Law of God might be applied within the nation:
Deut. 31:9—Then Moses wrote this law and gave it to *the priests*, the sons of Levi, who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and to all *the elders* of Israel.
The _____ →
The _____ →
 - * The Lord indicts the people for overly burdening the elders with their collective sin and rebellion (Isa. 47:6)
 - * The Lord indicts the elders for their idolatry (Ezek. 14:1-3) as well as their selfishness and refusal to properly shepherd His people (Ezek. 34:1-10).

Key Point: In the NT, the church is to be led by men who are _____ of the Lord Jesus that know His Word and can teach those who would also be His disciples to _____ it in every aspect of their lives.

The Task of an Elder—Titus 1:9

Titus 1:9— He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

- The character of an elder must be accompanied by a *commitment* to the truth of God's Word.

"*hold firm*" — ἀντέχω (*antechō*)—To hold oneself opposite to, i.e. (by implication) adhere to; by extension to care for.

⇒ The use of this term expresses the idea of unwavering _____ to something.

"*the trustworthy word*" — "the faithful word/message" —This combination of words (*pistos & logos*) is used seven times in the Pastoral Epistles and is associated with certain statements referred to as "trustworthy sayings."

1 Tim. 1:15—The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners...

1 Tim. 3:1—The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task.

2 Tim. 2:11-13—¹¹ The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; ¹² if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us; ¹³ if we are faithless, he remains faithful...

⇒ These appear to be references to certain statements or _____ that were taught within the early church.

⇒ The 'word' referenced here is 'the preaching' (1:3) with which Paul had been entrusted by Christ. It is trustworthy because of its _____. (Jesus Christ Paul The Churches)

"*as taught*" — διδαχή (*didachē*)—"which is in accordance with *the teaching*" (NASB)— instruction (the act or the matter).

⇒ Paul seems to be referring here to a fixed body of _____ which was received by the churches.

"*My first principle is this. Christ laid down one definite system of truth which the world must believe without qualification, and which we must seek precisely in order to believe it when we find it.*" —Tertullian, The Prescriptions Against Heretics (2nd-3rd C.)

⇒ These teachings were handed down by the apostles, but were rooted in the Old Testament and eventually inscripturated in the _____.

2 Tim. 3:14-15—¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵ and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Key Point: An elder must know and love the biblical _____ that have come to shape his life.

- There are two main purposes (one *positive*, one *negative*) for an elder's commitment to the truth of God's Word.

1. So that he can give _____ in the truths of the Gospel.

παρακαλέω (*parakaleō*)— To address, speak to, (call to, call upon), which may be done in the way of exhortation, entreaty, comfort, instruction, etc. "To impress upon someone."

⇒ The term emphasizes teaching that is both authoritative and _____, calling believers to live out their faith in all areas of life.

“*sound doctrine*”—This combinations of the terms *hygiainō* (to have sound health, i.e. be well in body; figuratively, to be uncorrupt) and *didaskalia* (instruction; the function or the information:—doctrine, learning, teaching) is used five times in the Pastoral Epistles.

1 Tim. 1:8-11—⁸Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, ⁹ understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰ the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, ¹¹ in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

1 Tim. 6:3— If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness...

⇒ Sound doctrine is rooted in the OT and is built upon the teachings of _____ and the _____.

⇒ The end goal of sound doctrine is a _____ way of life.

Key Point: For the overall health of the church, elders must be able to _____ others the truths of the Gospel that they themselves have come to embody.

2. So that he can _____ opponents of the Gospel.

ἐλέγχω (*elégchō*)— To confute, admonish:—convict, convince, tell a fault, rebuke, reprove.

⇒ The use of this term recognizes the reality of opposition to the Gospel and the necessity of men within the church who are capable of both _____ biblical truth and refuting the arguments of those who oppose it.

“*those who contradict*”—ἀντιλέγω (*antilegō*)— to dispute, refuse:—answer again, contradict, deny; to speak against.

⇒ The opponents in view here are not just unbelievers, but are _____ believers. They do not simply lack understanding, but instead seek to actively oppose the sound doctrine delivered by Paul and Titus.

* *They reject sound teaching in their _____.*

* *They reject sound teaching in their _____.*

⇒ Paul anticipates both _____ and _____ false teachings that will be a threat to the churches (1:10-16).

Key Point: For the overall health of the church, elders must be able to _____ false teaching and confront those who propagate it.

“*The task of Christian teaching is to clarify, illuminate, cohesively interpret, and defend the convictions distinctive to Christianity that empower and enable the Christian life.*” —Thomas Oden, Classic Christianity: A Systematic Theology

Concluding Thoughts

1. _____ (_____) imagery best illustrates the task of an elder.

John 21:15-17—¹⁵ When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” ¹⁶ He said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” ¹⁷ He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.

1 Pet. 5:1-4—¹ 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.

2. It is the Lord Jesus who is the chief _____ of His people.

John 10:24-28—²⁴ So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.” ²⁵ Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, ²⁶ but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. ²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How concerned am I with knowing biblical doctrine?
2. How often do I place myself under the teaching of the elders of the church?