

The Qualifications of a Pastor (Part 2)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 30 March 2015

Preacher: Tom Holland

[0:00] We are going to continue our look at Titus, the great book of the Bible. Have you ever heard me teach and not say this is a great book of the Bible?

I mean, if I ever get up and say, I really don't care for this book. I'm not sure why it's in the canon. It's just removed me, you know, from the room.

Maybe when you teach on Leviticus, you won't say that. Yeah, I've read Leviticus. Don't ever read it while you're laying in bed. Actually, Leviticus 16 is one of the great chapters of the Bible.

Well, Tom, Paul wrote a lot of Hebrews. He wrote Leviticus. No, I mean, he wrote Hebrews, but not Leviticus. Well, he had to study Leviticus to write Hebrews, I can tell you, because you have to study Leviticus to understand Hebrews.

I'm glad he did. I'm getting ready to cover a passage in my Sunday morning class that's going to blow a real hole in all that. But I'm going to make sure you're not here that Sunday.

[1:17] No, no, no, I'm a ways off. You'll let me know. Now, I'm going to turn the recorder off during that. You might recall last week we were talking about the qualifications of the pastor or elders of the church.

And I believe that many of these qualifications or characteristics apply to most church leaders. You may not be a pastor.

In fact, most of us aren't. There's one in here or two. But we're going to continue to look at these qualifications, and I think they're very relevant to everyone in here.

And we're still in the first chapter of Titus, verse 7 to 9. For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word, which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

I think one of the evidences, and there are many, but one of the evidences of divine inspiration is the ability of the Holy Spirit to convey much truth with an economy of words.

[2:57] If we were to cover everything contained in or implied by these three verses, we could write volumes, just be volumes of information.

The Holy Spirit does it in 68 English words, probably fewer in the original Greek language. And in our lesson tonight, we're going to talk about the general character of the elder.

Interesting, the Spirit, writing through the human author Paul, starts out with some negatives. He actually starts out with what a pastor must not be.

Kind of an interesting way to put it. For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain.

We have a list of knots there. And as we said last time, the overseer, we're talking about the pastor, the elder. He is one who watches over others the way a shepherd watches over his flock.

[4:13] And we all appreciate the imagery there with Christ as the great shepherd and the flock of God. Paul uses this term, and Paul did write Titus, by the way. We're pretty certain of that.

Paul uses this term to represent the leadership that the pastor has over the church. In that regard, the elders are the spiritual or moral compass of the church.

And this can only happen if such men are totally yielded to Christ as the head of the church and her chief shepherd. The pastor and elders are the divinely appointed shepherds or under-shepherds of the church.

And Paul begins with a characteristic that is written in stone. The man chosen, he uses the word an overseer, must be above reproach.

He must be above reproach. A pastor cannot teach the truth unless he's living the truth. Now, he may pull that off for a season, but eventually it's going to all come crashing down.

[5:25] It will all come crashing down. I remember the story of a young pastor who asked for and received a meeting with Dr. MacArthur. While leading a church of less than 100 people, he had an affair with the church secretary and was put out of the congregation.

He asked John if he thought he could ever return to the pulpit and preach the gospel again. And Dr. MacArthur, whether you agree or not, Dr. MacArthur said to the hurting young man, he said, I believe you have one shot at that.

And if you have violated the biblical standard in a moral way, you forfeit that. And the young man went on to say, but look, I'm not Jimmy Swaggart. I'm not Jim Baker.

Nobody even knows who I am. To which Dr. MacArthur responded, but God knows who you are. And very, very revealing.

But God knows who you are. The pastor stands behind the pulpit representing Christ as he preaches the words of Christ.

[6:40] And we kind of covered a little of this yesterday morning in here. We started a message on Galatians, or a lesson on Galatians. And don't let there be any confusion about what the words of Christ are.

They're not just the ones in red letters. The words of Christ begin in the beginning of God, and they end just before maps in the end of the book.

Just go to maps and go left. And when you get into the end of Revelation, those are the words of Christ. Now, the overseer, the pastor, is the steward of God.

And because that is true, Paul lists a number of negatives concerning the role of the elder or the overseer. Not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain.

A person that is self-willed is arrogant, is conceited. That person could care less how this self-centered attitude impacts on others.

[7:57] He could care less. Any person who is driven by being self-willed is driven essentially by pride. And pride is the root, the very root of all sin.

And pride does two things. Pride disregards the interest and welfare of others. And pride disregards God's will and replaces his purpose and his glory with man's.

The person that's self-willed is going to be teaching or preaching his purpose to his glory. I wouldn't dare call any name, but I remember many years ago in this church, very few of you were even here. And some of you, maybe all of you that were, never knew about this. But we had a man and his wife that were teachers. And one morning they came in, Sunday morning, they taught their lesson. And then they announced to the classes, a women's class and men's class, that they were resigning. We're going to teach them. They'd been teaching for 25 years. And everyone was just stunned.

[9:10] They said, so you'll need to find a teacher because we won't be here next week. And our associate, Mike Stark, he went to this couple and they were reluctant. And finally they opened up and they said, well, and Mike shared this with me, he said, we've been teaching in this church for 25 years.

And no one has ever even thrown a party for us in appreciation of our teaching. And to make a long story short, Mike talked them into continuing and they came back.

And I think they felt bad about it. But I told Mike when he told me that, I said, Mike, if I ever say anything like that, you take a gun and you shoot me and don't wound me.

You finish me off. My gosh, I couldn't, you know, I just couldn't believe it. I couldn't believe it. But I find it interesting that leaders in the corporate world are often very self-willed and self-assertive.

That is what the world considers to be a leader. And that's the exact opposite in the church.

Self-willed men have no place in church leadership.

[10:25] Now, trust me when I say this. We all battle this. We all battle self-will. We all battle pride. We all battle self-glory. And with God's strength and blessing, we will be victorious.

But always remember, Jesus said, the greatest among you will be your servant. I said that in a meeting at Phelps one time, Lee, they looked at me like I was from Mars.

I said, they were talking about, you know, leadership. And I said, well, you're the greatest leader is a servant. They thought I was from another planet. A second quality of an elder is that he is not

quick-tempered.

My wife will never be an elder. This is not referring. What's said in here stays in here. This is not referring to an occasional outburst of anger.

It is referring to one who has a propensity to anger in many and varied situations. We would say that such a person has a short fuse and is easily provoked.

[11:32] By the way, my wife is not like that. She has the gift of mercy. Believe it or not, she really does. And a former pastor, Ed Sossier, said, I know Diane's got a gift of mercy because she's merciful to everybody but you.

Usually not merciful to the person right next to them, but they're merciful to everybody else. It's cost me a lot of money over the years because of her gift of mercy. Trust me. You know, we know people that have short fuses and are easily provoked.

Easily provoked. Instead of turning to anger, the true believer and especially the elder will draw upon the fruits of the spirit as a way of dealing with every situation.

Well, what are the fruits of the spirit? Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and there it is, self-control.

By the way, if you ever want to describe Jesus to somebody, just use the fruits of the spirit. When we live like that, everything else will fall into place.

[12:41] Everything else will fall into place. The qualified elder is not to be addicted to wine. I hope no one in here is disappointed with that, but he's not to be addicted to wine.

In the original language, that is a picture of someone who lives their life in the presence of wine.

And Paul says, don't make wine your companion.

Now, when these words were written, wine back then could be alcohol-free or it could contain an intoxicant.

And I think, obviously, Paul's speaking of elders not using intoxicating drink that would bring them to a level of drunkenness. Drunkenness. And interestingly, the same Greek word used for a wine addiction was also used to describe a brawler.

They talked about being a brawler. Because, you know, a lot of drunks are disorderly. We deal with them all the time down at the police department. All the time, every day. Every single day. Now, to carry it a step further, the elders should avoid places that are offering intoxicating beverages.

[14:01] Don't engage in even the appearance of evil. Don't engage in that. I remember years ago, Justin was going to a bar with some of the guys.

And Diane, of course, she's not bashful about correcting our sons, even though they're 41 and 37.

And he said, wow, I might be able to witness to those people in there. She said, really? Have you ever witnessed anybody in your life?

Well, no, but I might, you know. She's, again, you know, German-Scottish. The elders should avoid those.

You know, don't even engage in what appears to be evil. Now, I should point out that wine in Paul's day was very important. Water was often contaminated.

Water could kill a person. Our water is safe. Certainly bottled water, I've been a lot of places, as you have, Sean and others.

[15:06] You have to grit your teeth when you shower. You have to brush your teeth with bottled water. I mean, when I'm in Nigeria, I'm always thinking, I wonder if they took these bottles and put it under a water tap and filled them up.

You know, I mean, and I used to travel with these guys, and we'd go to these almost third world, and they'd sit down there and say, well, I'll have a Coca-Cola to drink because it's bottled.

You know. And then they'd say, I'd like some ice with that. And I'm going, where do you think that ice came from? You know, water can be very dangerous, even in our day. And so they did drink wine back there.

You know, when that guy got the stomachache and Paul said, well, take a little wine, you know, to settle your stomach down. The elder is not to be pugnacious. That used to be a more common word than it is now, pugnacious.

In other words, try and avoid a fist fight. Don't be a brawler. Don't get in a fight. And apparently that was somewhat of a common practice in the early days of the New Testament.

[16:18] That was, for one thing, how men settled disputes. Trust me, they used to do that at the police department. I remember those days. If you had a problem with a fellow officer, you'd go out

back, and you'd settle.

You came back in. You were usually friends. You were bleeding, both of you, but they settled it. Like, well, you don't do that nowadays. Oh, my gosh. We'd have a Ferguson.

Interestingly, the word pugnacious can also refer to verbal fighting. It's not just physical. It is physical, but it also can be verbal.

And let's face it, words can hurt, can't they? Words can sometimes hurt more than physical injuries.

The pastor and elders are never to be mean-spirited, abusive, never seek retaliation.

In fact, we're admonished to be at peace with all men so far as it is possible with us. And that applies to everybody. Now, when we're talking of pugnacious fighting, what about a soldier in combat?

[17 : 30] What about a police officer protecting us? Romans 13, they've been given the sword to protect society from evil and from evildoers.

God knew that we have a tendency to chaos. And God has designed government to protect the good, to protect the culture, and he's given a branch of that government, the sword.

Having said that, there are times when soldiers or police officers kill, but also it's possible for a soldier or a police officer to murder.

If they get carried away and do something, you know, that's possible, too. And that would be a horrible sin for which they would be accountable to God. I'll tell you a step further.

What about a husband protecting his wife and children from a burglar or from a rapist? Now, there's room here for you to disagree with me, okay? And I don't want to be hard.

[18 : 35] I mean, but if the guy breaks into your after that, you need to kill him. I'm sorry, but do what it takes to protect your family.

And if you don't have to go that far, then fine, go as far as you have to. We have, in the police work, we can use force necessary to make the arrest.

And we have a continuous and elevating thing. You know, if we do this and the guy doesn't submit and he goes up here, then we can go up here and this thing can keep rising until we get to deadly force.

But that's only used in very select circumstances. Very select circumstances. But I think you are commanded by God to protect your family.

And particularly in this evil day. We were talking earlier, you know, he who doesn't care for his own family is worse than an infidel. We would not stand by to let someone violate our children or our wife.

[19 : 39] A qualified elder is not fond of sordid gain. Very interesting word there. I'm 67. I wish I was 47.

I'm 67 years old. That's the first time I knew there were two Ds in that word. I've been saying for 67 years, sordid. I thought that was the word.

And I told her, I said, they've misspelled the Bible here. And she said, no, you've been doing it wrong. It's sordid. I didn't realize that. Paul is referring to those who seek wealth or fortune without honesty or integrity.

Without honesty or integrity. It is the seeking of prosperity at any cost. And shamefully, many of the high flyers in the charismatic movement fall into this category.

And I sometimes watch a little of that just for the circus atmosphere. And they could be more prepared to come and teach and all that. But I don't take it as a steady diet.

[20 : 44] I know that without calling any names, that Creflo Dollar right now is calling on his supporters to provide him with a \$68 million jet aircraft.

And he said, it will carry 20 people. You know how many tickets you can buy for 20 people for \$68 million? Particularly if you'll go coach.

A lot of tickets. And that's just one of many, many, many, many, many examples. And I want to make sure, though, on this point.

All Christians, talking about pastors, have the right and the duty to make a living for themselves and their families. And we all have that duty, right?

And I'm so thankful. And I kind of remember this because I'm old. But gone are the days when the pastor and his family was predominantly paid with eggs and chickens and bacon and produce from the local gardens.

[21:49] Your dad remembered those days, Mike, because we talked about it. That's how they carried on. You know, and guys would show up and they'd lay it on them, you know.

Those who preach the gospel can and should expect to receive a livable wage for doing so. In fact, Paul told the Corinthians the minister is worthy of double honor.

And I think there he probably was referring to not only money to provide for his family but esteem as well from the church. In the early church, many false teachers entered the pastorate to mooch off the church.

And we've been studying that. We said that in my class in here just recently. Paul was deaf on that. He didn't like that. Of course, you remember, Paul, he was a tip maker.

He said, well, I've earned you all to pay me, but I'm not going to do that. I want to make my living.

[22:54] I'd love to have one of those tents, by the way. Who wouldn't? And I think I can only recall Paul receiving money one time from church. Wasn't that the Philippians from Epaphroditus brought him some money when he was in prison?

So not any examples of Paul, you know, being a salaried member of the deal. He was a tip maker. But the false teachers liked him.

He said, well, the false teachers today like to mooch. They like to mooch. Men do that to this day. I could name a half a dozen churches in this town that are staffed by unbelievers.

I mean, clear. I mean, they'll tell you. No, I don't believe that. Word? Word? Paul? He's a human.

He just wrote words. We can learn something from him. Well, those are some of the things that the pastor should not be.

So I hope Paul will help us out here and tell us what he should be, and he's going to. He said in verse 8, the pastor should be hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, and self-controlled.

[24:07] So now we see some positive features of the general character of the pastor elder. And the first one we see is that the pastor elder must be hospitable.

And I really apologize at this point because I've got a bunch of Greek words, and I forgot to ask Don how to pronounce them. But we have a compound word here. Phileo is one of them.

And it's affection. Affection. And the other is ex-e-n-o-s. Xenos means stranger. Affection for strangers.

Now, it's easy to see where we're going with that word. That's the word hospitable. The individual that is hospitable helps people in need.

We help people in need, don't we? And, you know, guys, there's a fine line there. We don't necessarily help people in want. Okay? We look for people that have needs.

[25:11] And, boy, this church has been an outpouring the last three years through our missions program, and I'm excited about the events yesterday and seeing what we're going to do next.

People that are hospitable will help friends. But you know what? They'll help strangers. They'll help strangers. We help believers.

We help unbelievers. And, you know, we initially, we almost immediately think of money. But it can also include time, other resources.

Maybe it's an offering of encouragement. To be hospitable is to meet others' needs when you are able to, when you can meet those needs.

Now, as he often did, the Lord Jesus took hospitality to a higher level than what was being practiced in first century Palestine.

[26:13] Look at, I'm going to read to you Luke 14, 12 to 14. When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors.

Otherwise, they may also invite you in return. That will be your repayment. But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed since they do not have the means to repay you.

For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous. Now, this doesn't mean we can't have fellowship and gatherings among ourselves. If we couldn't get together and eat, we wouldn't be Baptists, for one thing.

But Paul actually will address this in the book of Galatians. And I'll be teaching on this passage about March of next year. So then, Galatians 6, 10, so then while we have opportunity, underline that thought, let us do good to all people and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

We're to be hospital to everybody, but especially when you see a brother or sister in need. And that's scriptural. The writer to the book of Hebrews, whoever it might be, said that when we show hospitality, we might even be entertaining angels unawares.

[27:47] Hebrews 13, 2. I was like that just right before 13, 3, which we both work at at VOM. Look that up if you don't know what that says.

A second positive quality of the pastor is he loves to do what is good. The pastor elder should be drawn to those things that are intrinsically good and be repelled by those things that are bad or evil. And Paul covered this well in the book of Philippians. Philippians 4, 8. I know some of you haven't memorized. Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

Great, great verse of Scripture. Third, the pastor elder is to be sensible. That is a way of saying sober-minded or under control even in very tense situations.

You're to be under control. And sometimes that Greek word is translated prudent. A sensible person is someone in control of his mind.

[29:13] He even controls the things he thinks about. The pastor is devoted to priorities and avoids things that are immoral, unspiritual, and unproductive.

They're going to get in the way. They're counterproductive. The priorities of the pastor are centered on Christ. And he is devoted to that as central to his whole life.

What would Jesus do? The kids have it right. What would Jesus do? I'm going to come out with an arm band so that Jesus would do right. What Jesus would do righteously. Pastor is just.

He pursues those things that are proper, fitting, and right. That word, by the way, can also be translated righteous. The pastor is righteous or just because that reflects the character of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The ultimate righteous, just person. And we're to be conformed to his image. We're to be like him. The pastor must also be devout.

[30:18] That comes from a Greek word closely related to the word holy. Through obedience, the pastor is to be above reproach in every area of life.

And that would encompass his time alone with the Lord, sermon preparation, delivery, counseling situations, and one that we don't think of often but is vitally important, and that's his family life.

That's his family life. Been on a lot of pulpit committees. Mike, you have too. We finally got to the point where we asked guys, you know, tell us about your quiet time. Tell us, you know, about your library.

How do you spend time at home? Important. The last of the positive qualities of the pastor is self-control. And this, of course, is one of the fruits of the Spirit.

It applies to every single one of us. Now, how can any of us achieve self-control? And there is really only one way to do so. We can live an exemplary life outside as we submit to the control of our life of the Holy Spirit from the inside.

[31:28] So we're living it from the inside out, not from the outside in. It's not what we take in. It's what comes out. Outward righteousness is a good thing, but it falls short of the divine standard.

We are what is going on inside us. Every time I say a word, I'm convicting myself. Something's flashing into my mind. We are what is going on inside us.

Inward righteousness is demanded of God's servants. I've said before, our character, who we are, is what we do when we're alone.

That's who we are. So if you ever have any doubts about who you are, just wait for the next time you're alone. And however you spend those hours or the day, that's who you are.

A person exercising self-control is to, one, continually monitor his own life. We're to do that.

[32:35] We're to submit our sins to the Lord through confession so we can be cleansed of all unrighteousness, 1 John 1, 9.

And keep a clear conscience. Keep a clear conscience. God will speak to you through conscience. And if it's not clear, he's going to tell you. Keep a clear conscience.

I love what Dr. McBride used to say. Keep short accounts with God. Keep short accounts. When Lucille, his wife almost died a couple of years ago, we sent out a little note and he said, another example.

We need to keep short accounts with God. We can be standing before him in a moment. Paul also talks to Titus about teaching skill.

This was very important. Remember, Titus is developing ministers for Crete. And Paul's going to tell Titus this is what they're going to need as far as being teachers.

[33 : 35] Holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching so that he, and that's the pastors that are going to be on Crete and by extension all pastors and elders, all teachers, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

Twofold. The pastor elder has been called to teach the flock. Don does it weekly several times and does it very well. The call was issued by God or it is an illegitimate call.

And there are a lot of guys serving around the country that never got called. You know, the phone never rang. When I was a kid, I knew a pastor. Boy, he was terrible.

And liberal, oh, my gosh. But my mom asked him, he said, Lincoln, why did you even go into the ministry? He said, my mom made me. I had no choice.

My whole life she said, you're going to be a preacher. And I had no choice. That wasn't the call.

Those called to leadership as pastors or elders should be able to preach, teach, and guard God's truth.

[34 : 58] That's what Paul's telling Titus to look for in these ministers. They've got to be able to preach. They've got to be able to teach. But they're going to have to guard God's truth.

Why? False teachers. They were everywhere. And we've got more in our day than at any time in the history of the church. They're all over the place.

I told you about in the past a guy in Chicago born and raised in San Juan, Puerto Rico, who will tell you he's God. And he's greater than Jesus.

Jesus was a failure and a flop, and I'm here to correct his failures. And he said, I am God on earth.

And, boy, he's got a following, and they are forking over the money.

He's got money rolling in, rolling in. He was interviewed by CNN, and they were criticizing him for blasphemy. CNN. Oh, my gosh.

[36 : 01] Preaching and teaching are spiritual gifts that are sovereignly bestowed on those called by God to that office.

The level that elders have to preach and teach varies. Not all of us can serve in the capacity of a John MacArthur, a Billy Graham, or a Don Coleman.

You know, the three greats there. But the elder is equipped by God to teach and preach at the level God determines. It's at the level God determines.

Now, the foundation to all this is that the pastor elder must hold fast to the Word of God. Hold fast to the Word of God.

How many pastors are there in this country who don't even believe in the Word of God, much less hold fast to it?

[37 : 01] And I'm telling you, they're in this town. I'd stand at City Hall and hit a couple of good golf shots and hit a couple of those churches. Maybe three.

They're here. Hold fast means to strongly cling or adhere. Faithful pastors and elders cling to the faithful Word that has been given to us by the Spirit of God.

We are to love God's Word, respect God's Word, study God's Word, believe God's Word, and then you always have to throw a little water damp and things.

Obey. You never want to leave that Word out. Obey God's Word. By the way, if we do all those except that last one, it's all for naught, right?

You've got to be obeying. Are there going to be seasons when you're not obeying? Yeah. And God will convict you and you need to come back.

[38 : 08] Look, the failure of ministries today is the failure to hold fast to the Word. I can think of specific ministries around the country that have fallen due to sin and it ultimately was a failure to hold fast or obey the Word of God.

Now, that type of failure is not something new. It's not something new. I sometimes like to review in the Old Testament the great sin of David.

And if you do it in reverse order, this is what you come up with. David had Uriah, the Hittite, murdered.

You think about that. David murdered a man by proxy. David had the Hittite murdered because David had impregnated his wife Bathsheba and he didn't want anybody to find out.

What was he thinking? Except the guy told you he went to Doxon and his family had been killed. He said, I'm mad at God. Have you told him? No. I don't want him to know. David didn't want anyone to find out.

[39:34] You've got two problems. God already knew. And Bathsheba is going to be getting fat. I don't use that word around the house for a pregnant woman, but she's going to be pregnant.

But let's go back. What's behind that? How did David end up like that? He impregnated Bathsheba because one evening he looked down from the palace to her rooftop and saw her bathing and became aroused.

And by the way, you think, well, what's she doing on the rooftop? That's common in the Middle East. I've been on a lot of them. We've had barbecues on rooftops.

And in the Arab world, we sat up there and watched the stars. And it's a pretty, of course, it's hot, you know, and you get the breeze. Rooftops were very big in Palestine.

David looks down from his rooftop and he spots an attractive woman bathing and he sins for her. That's how she got pregnant. Well, what was behind that one?

[40:42] What was David doing on the palace rooftop? He had chosen to ignore God's word.

God said it is the springtime when kings go out with their armies to do battle against the enemies of God.

And then the next verse says, and David was in Jerusalem. He didn't go out. He sent guys out to die for him. His failure was initiated by a failure to obey the word of God.

And look at the trouble it got into. And people say, but David was forgiven. And yes, he was. Psalm 51, aren't we glad? Aren't we glad? But what a price to pay.

Nathan went to him and, you know, he said, you are the man. And David fell on his face in repentance. And he said, Nathan said, God has not taken away your salvation.

[41:51] But. And I've always said that but will preach a number of messages. David paid dearly for that the rest of his life. You know, I always wondered what happened when he got to heaven and there's Uriah.

I mean, what do you say? What do you say? I don't know the answer to that. Do you see how that cascaded when he disobeyed the word of God? Finally, there are two reasons the pastor elders to hold fast to the word of God.

That he may be able to exhort in sound doctrine. And thank God we have that here. And to refute those who contradict. And we're going to comment on these and then we'll be closed.

But both those things are real necessary in our day. Positively, the pastor is to exhort believers in sound doctrine. I've said before, doctrine is the glue that holds us together.

It's what we believe of the word of God. That's where God's people are strengthened with knowledge so they can obey what God commands.

[43:01] Exhorting the church is urging, beseeching, or encouraging. We are to exhort in sound doctrine. Sound is an interesting word in the Greek language.

We get the English word hygiene. Isn't that interesting? Clean. Sounds healthy, wholesome. Those are the things that protect and preserve life.

The pastor's role is to teach us sound doctrine that both protects us and preserves our spiritual health. That's the analogy.

We often say we want to be a healthy church. Well, that begins with sound doctrine. Knowing what we believe about the Lord. But then the pastor must also, and all of us really, must also be able to refute those who contradict sound doctrine.

Is there anybody out there doing that? Everywhere. To refute means to speak against. We should all be able to speak out against unsound doctrine.

[44:17] It is the false teachers that are so prevalent in our day that contradict sound doctrine. No believer is immune from the leaven of false teachers.

They're everywhere. And now with the speed of television, the Internet, and all this stuff, we have to be so careful. So the godly, I mean, I remember Malcolm Smith, who was somewhat of a charismatic, but he had his head on straight.

I remember him preaching one time, and he said he used to go into his children's room when they were little, and he'd kneel down after they were asleep, and he'd pray. And he said, oh, God, please deliver my children from pornography and religion. You know, deliver them from both.

We should all be able to speak out against unsound doctrine. So the godly role of the pastor-elder is to proclaim and defend God's Word.

And this is done through preaching and teaching. I saw this graphically portrayed at the West, Oklahoma Western University. I think it was Sunday afternoon when they had discussion, and 900 people showed up on the homosexual agenda.

[45 : 31] And one of the liberal guys from one of the Episcopal churches here spoke up, and he just said, well, I just want to say there's an alternate view to all this, blah, blah, blah. And he didn't get very far with that crowd, but he still holds to that.

He's still here teaching false doctrine. So the godly role is to proclaim and defend, and that's done through preaching and teaching. We often hear in our day a buzzword.

It's the word tolerance. And I came to a conclusion last week, and I discussed this with my son over at Branson, Rob. As Christians, we should be the most tolerant people on earth.

We should totally and completely tolerate the teaching of sound doctrine. So we're at the zenith of tolerance. We believe everything Jesus said, everything the Spirit wrote, and we want to live it until Jesus comes back.

Thank you. Thank you.