

1 Timothy 3:1-13

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: 24 November 2024

Preacher: Billy Joe Calvert

[0 : 00] book of 1 Timothy chapter 3. 1 Timothy chapter 3, our text this morning will be verses 1 through 13. You probably thought I preached the most controversial passage of scripture found in 1 Timothy last week when we were in the second chapter where we dealt with men and women.

But I will let you know that historically the most controversial chapter in 1 Timothy is where we're at right now. 1 Timothy chapter 3 verses 1 through 13. You will know why when we get into the text and hopefully we'll have no controversy in here.

Hopefully we will seek to understand the word of God as written by the man of God to the people of God. Our desire, let's just go ahead and set this precedence first, okay?

It is our desire to be biblically accurate. That's our desire. So when we go to scripture, understandably, each one of us go with what you can call preconceived notions or the Latin phrase is the sits in limbium. You go with your situation in life.

That is however you were raised, the environment you were raised in. Understandably, we all have rose-colored glasses when we go to scripture and we read our circumstances into that.

[1 : 17] But our desire ought to be for the Lord to overcome our preconceived notions. And we come before him open and bare and say, Lord, just help us to see the word in its honest, true clarity.

So that's our ambition. So there are times now, I say this because we're at a portion of scripture which, as far as the church goes, not this church, but the church historical, there are a lot of different interpretations upon them.

But we're not seeking to choose a side here. We're not seeking to say this one's right, this one's wrong. You'll understand why in just a moment. But what we're trying to say is this is what the word of God says. And now it's up to us to adjust how we interpret that and how we apply it.

Remember this, okay? And we say this with every portion of scripture. The Bible states, no matter where you're at, no matter what portion of scripture you turn to, it is declaring one great truth.

It is not that there is a truth that you can figure out and a truth that I can figure out. There is but one truth to every passage. But with that truth, there are a multitude of applications.

[2 : 25] That is, how we apply that truth in our daily living out as a church body. So there's one great truth, and our ambition is to find that truth. We can differ in application, but friend, listen to me.

We can't differ in truth, okay? So we understand that, and we come to it with an honest assessment. So if you have your Bibles and you're physically able and desire to do so, I'm going to ask you to join with me as we stand together.

1 Timothy 3, verses 1 through 13 will be our text. And some of you, when we read them, you say, oh, well, that's not a whole lot of controversy there. But when we get into it, hopefully we'll see how there has been controversy, but there does not need to be.

Okay, here we go. Let's start with verse 1. It is a trustworthy statement. If any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. An overseer then must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money.

And he must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity. But if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?

[3 : 37] And not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Deacons, likewise, must be men of dignity, not double-tongued or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid game, but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. These men must also first be tested, then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach.

Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things. Deacons must be husbands of only one wife and good managers of their children in their own households. For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this day. What a joy it is to be gathered with the people of God and the church of God and to read together and to hear together the word of God. So now we pray that you would speak to our hearts and minds.

We pray that the truth of scripture would captivate us, that it would be that which sets us apart for your glory and honor. We pray that you would help us to conform to the truth, to have a willingness to live it out for your glory and our good.

[4 : 46] And we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. As we have been reading through and studying through the book of 1 Timothy, you know that I stopped just short of what is the theme of the book itself.

Starting in verse 14 and 15, really declare to us what the theme or the purpose of the book of 1 Timothy is. Paul says, I have written these things so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the church, in the household of God, which is the church, the pillar and the support of the truth.

So Paul is writing here. So the church itself, really going through Timothy, whom he had left behind to appoint and raise up elders. He is writing to Timothy so that Timothy can instruct these men, certain men we find out later in the book of 2 Timothy, how they ought to do church, what it ought to look like, how they ought to behave with one another, how they ought to cooperate with one another, and how they ought to function as a body.

Because the church is really an instrumental, if not the only aspect of God's reach into the world that stands in desperate need. So how we do church absolutely matters.

So we need to understand that, that man is not free to dictate and determine what church looks like. Okay, now we say that because that does not necessarily mean that every church has to meet in an 1800s building, sit in pews, hold hymnals, and sing those traditional songs.

[6 : 15] That's not what we're talking about. We're talking about that there are certain big rock issues of what church is that it ought to be because they are clearly given to us in scripture.

And these are because God is a God of order. So what I want you to see this morning, we have been looking at this series on being the church, and this morning I want you to see it is an ordered and organized assembly.

The church is an ordered and organized assembly. You need to understand, now I know we're kind of preaching on the church to the church here, but it really is very becoming and good for us to understand what we are.

The word itself, church, implies something that is called out and organized. Actually, the word in the original language, ecclesia, was a word that was used of any group of individuals that was called out from among a larger group of individuals for a specific purpose.

Your pastor's wife just received a letter in the mail from the county sheriff's department. She didn't really know why the sheriff was sending her a letter, and I really didn't know why the sheriff was sending her a letter. Some of you already know why. It's because she'd been summoned to jury duty, right?

[7 : 20] Now, so if they appoint a jury, then she is a part of an ecclesia. She has been called out for a group of people from a larger group for a purpose to sit on the jury for the trial.

We see that here in even these New Testament times when people were called out from a larger group and set apart for a specific purpose. They were an ecclesia. That very common word was the word used for the church because the church has been called out from the general populace for a specific purpose, that is to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, to offer the hope of redemption and sanctification, to offer the peace with God that no one else can.

So the church is there, but the church being an ecclesia, it's not just a disorganized body that gets to exhibit and live however it wants to because it is not only an organism, it is living and growing and multiplying, so it's an organism, but it is an organism with organization.

That is, there is certain structure that is given to the church because, friend, listen to me, God is a God of order. And he establishes order, and we're thankful for it.

Things work according to purpose. Things work according to plan. When you woke up this morning, you expected, if the sun was not already up, you expected the sun to come up. You expect the sun to set at some point today.

[8 : 45] You expect all of these things to happen. The seasons, the Bible tells us in the book of Genesis, were in the air or put in the air to be a testimony to time and seasons. And they testify to the God of order, right?

These things are orderly because this is how it ought to be. This time of year, it's getting a little cool. We're thankful. Some of us say, well, I don't like cold weather, but we're thankful because this is how it ought to be, right?

The order is a security thing. So what we find out is even when we come to the church, though it is a called out group of people, within that group, there are certain orders and organizations in that assembly, and they absolutely matter.

So there's some things that I want you to understand because for the church to properly function, then it must properly be ordered. It ought to operate the way God has called it to be. I have said this, and I've said this before because we just happen to have walked through these matters sometimes in business sessions, and we've looked at this, and I made this declaration to some, I have said that I do not think the church has to do certain things.

We'll get to it in just a minute, but I think the church is healthier if it can do these matters, and this is what we will see here. We see, number one, the calling of its parts. For a church to be ordered, we need to understand its parts have been called.

[10 : 03] So let's start at what we call the big level, and let's make ourselves our way down to the smaller level. One that is implied within the text that is really not there because it's not speaking to us specifically, but one that is implied is the congregation.

The first thing that we understand is that you are called to be a part of the body of Christ, which is called the church, and that is the congregation. The congregation is the big part, right?

It is the larger structure of the church, but we do not overlook it just because it's the largest portion of the church because it is also the most instrumental portion of the church.

You are first to be a part of the congregation before you are called to be anything else. So if you ever say, well, I'm just a church member, don't ever say it that way. Don't ever walk around, well, I'm nothing special. I'm just a church member who does this.

No, you walk around, you say, guess what I am? I am a church member because I have been called according to the purposes of God before the foundations of the world were laid and united to his body.

[11 : 00] Before you can be anything else within the church, you must first be a member of the church, right? You must first be a believer. You must first know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

So the very, very first calling of any church is the calling to be of Christ. Friend, listen to me. If you are present this morning and you do not know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, now follow my line of thought with me here.

If you have never accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, if you have never given him your life, then with all due respect, what's going on here is you are just a participant observing the ecclesia being gathered together.

Okay, you are not a part of the called out body because before you can ever be a part of the called out body, you must respond to the calling of salvation. That is not saying that you're not welcome here.

That is not saying that we are not thankful that you are here. It is just the absolute fact that attending a meeting does not make you, I can go to the court and watch a trial, but that does not mean I'm on the jury, right?

[11 : 59] So we understand this reality. The very first calling is the calling to salvation. And it is the congregation. Now friend, listen to me. Don't overlook that because I believe scripture testifies to this.

Baptist history testifies to this. And we don't just say it because the Baptists have everything right. I'm Baptist enough to know there are a lot of things we don't have right, okay? But there are some things that we do have right in ecclesia, which is ecclesiology, the study of the church.

The one thing that we do understand here is that it is congregational led. So the congregation gathers together. You look in scripture and they're praying together.

They're uniting together. They have one heart, one mind. And then all of a sudden they begin to do things, right? Believe the first missionary journey is when Paul was sent out. They were sent out from the church. They came back and they gave an account to the church, right?

The leaders were appointed by the church. The deacons were given by the church. You see this over and over again, right? It is the congregation that's making decisions for the church. Understand that.

[13 : 04] It is congregational polity is the word for it. This is why, let me just stop right here. You know why I think business meetings are so important? Not because I think it's fun for every time you walk in the door you're given a sheet of paper that has my pay on it and everybody can look and see how much I make.

Not because we discuss all the mundane tasks of how much the power bills and light bills and all that stuff. Not because we talk about the security lights, by the way, they're up and they look great. Some of you don't even know they're there but you drive by the church at night and all of a sudden you can see the whole parking lot and that's important when you have 30 teenagers that hang out in the parking lot, right?

Not so you don't run over them just so we can see them, right? So we're expecting the headlights on your car will keep you from running over them but we're also expecting that parked cars give opportunities.

So we are thankful for those things, right? We don't think that business meetings are important so that we can do that. We think business meetings are important because it is your responsibility to make decisions for the church.

As a church member there are certain benefits that you have from us as the church, right? You have the benefits of communion with us. You have the benefits of fellowship with us.

[14 : 11] You have the benefits of the church. We love our own. We take care of our own. We comfort our own. We walk with our own. But there are also expectations that come with membership and one of those expectations is, I know this isn't comfortable, you show up and make decisions.

That's an expectation of members in the Baptist church because we believe you have the mind of Christ and if you have the mind of Christ and we want to walk in Christ then the more minds we can get together then all of a sudden the more intent we are to walk in that.

This is why this is important. That's the first calling. The second callings that we see here are the callings of the specific positions. Now this is the calling of its parts. It says, it is a trustworthy statement. Now pay attention to that phrase.

It is a trustworthy statement. It literally is a phrase that Paul is using in the pastoral epistles to introduce an important doctrine or an important truth. If you want to put it in context he has said in chapter 1 it is a trustworthy statement that Christ Jesus came to save sinners.

So he uses the very same phraseology he uses the very same phrase to introduce the positions of the church. So if it is a trustworthy statement deserving of full acceptance that Jesus Christ came to save sinners it is also a trustworthy statement that if any man aspires to the office of overseer it is a good work that he desires to do.

[15 : 34] So now all of a sudden we are introducing these specific parts apart from the congregation or the calling of the general it is the calling of the people in particular. If any man aspires to the office of overseer it is a fine work he desires to do.

Someone has pointed out that there are two differing words used here aspire and desire. Aspire means to be one who pursues something. Desire means to have an inward longing for it.

So it is the active pursuit of an inward longing to do something. Whenever I accepted the call to preach it was back in 2004 I was licensed to preach no 2000 and yeah 2004 I was deacon 2005 I was licensed to preach 2006 I was ordained to preach so all the way back then people said well did you ever run from the calling?

I never ran from the calling I never had that desire to say well I'm just some people would tell you the old line of thought was if you think God's calling you to preach run from it if he's really calling you he'll never let you get away from it I don't agree with that and the reason I don't agree with that is because if God has set a desire within your heart I read scripture it says woe be unto me if I preach not the gospel right Paul said but we cannot shy away from declaring the truth there are certain things they could not do and the reason they could not do them is because the desire within them was so strong we read the prophets and say there's a fire within my bones I must declare right so that's that inward desire to do this reality and then the outward expression of pursuing what God set in your heart friend listen to me if God puts a desire in your heart that is if God puts a desire in your heart then it is absolutely your calling to pursue the very thing you desire now we do this in context with the things that he states here that is we'll get to in just a moment but if the desire is put there of the Lord then there ought to be an aspiring to that an aspiration to move forward in that so he says here there are those who are called to be overseers now you need to know that overseers is the same word used

I know I'm going fast I got a lot of ground to cover even though we only have three points right overseers are the same office same position as other words that are interchangeable with it elders pastors shepherds those are the same right so pastor shepherd elder overseer this is not if some of you are reading from the King James version it says bishop there this is not an endorsement of the office of bishop rather it is not saying that there ought to be a bishop who heads up all these other churches we can really get into all that so we get kind of this division over the interpretation of scripture really he is stating the role of the elders as being overseer now to put it in context you would have to go to the fifth chapter which we will if the Lord tarries and allows us to go to the fifth chapter and you will see what I mean but anyway for the sake of time we understand that there are those who are called to be the congregation there are those who are called out of the congregation to be elders and then there are those who are called out of it says deacons likewise there are those who are called out of the congregation to be deacons it is my understanding in scripture that each of these specific offices elders pastors shepherds overseer however you want to declare it and deacons are those who are called out of the congregation those who are called from the congregation though at times they may serve other churches in that area so we understand this reality here are the calling of its part each part has a calling the bible tells us in ephesians 4 that god is constructing the body and if he's constructing the body then he's calling the parts in particular for a peculiar task so the calling of its parts number two we see the character that makes it up this is what we like to focus on when we come to the requirements for the elder or pastor we come to the requirements for the deacon if you were to open up the bylaws of this church or trace baptist church bylaws you would have this passage quoted almost verbatim as being the requirements for the office of pastor you would turn a couple pages you would also see these passages being quoted verbatim for the office of deacon but what I want you to understand and this may rock some of our world here the expectation of elders overseers pastors and deacons is no greater than the expectation for the average congregation the requirement for pastor and the requirement for deacon is the same requirement that comes for the primary calling of the congregation we've already declared this if we want to stay true to our line of thought right if the congregation is the one that makes the decision then shouldn't we expect at least as high of a character among the congregation as we do from every other aspect now with that being said the elders pastors and deacons are to be those who exhibit such character traits that they would be worthy of being modeled and followed by the congregation they are to be examples to the congregation so that's what disqualifies an individual from those roles is not because they are all of a sudden well you can't be this but you can be that really the reason we read church discipline in Matthew 18 and you will read again church discipline when we get to 1 Timothy 5 of an elder who walks out of qualifications they are removed from the church congregation they are not just removed from the pulpit they are removed from the body and the reason they are removed from the body go back to 1 Corinthians and you will see that people who walk out of step with these same character traits are also removed from the body they are the ones that Paul says

[21 : 15] I have handed such a one over to Satan so what we find is really just a highlighted and magnified character traits of individuals that are put on display for all to see now thankfully we have the word of God being very clear to us he says that the office of overseer it is a fine work an overseer then must be above reproach now the above reproach does not mean he is sinless that just means that he is living in such a way that whatever sins are there he has confessed those sins and he is living in repentance of those sins so much so that none from within the body or with outside the body by the way because that is what applies and is extended to the overseer or the pastor it is also a matter of what the individuals outside the body say about him that no one can bring an accusation against him which has not already been confessed and so everything under this falls under the heading of above reproach he must be above reproach as the husband of one wife he must be above reproach as being temperate prudent respectable hospitable

I know I'm skipping one I'm coming back to it in a little bit okay not addicted to wine or pugnacious I love the word pugnacious somebody said I don't even know what pugnacious means you know why I love the word pugnacious it means to punch one in the nose so you don't want an elder who goes around punching people in the nose essentially that's just a clear you know there are a lot of people I'd like to punch in the nose but I can't because it says I can't be pugnacious anyway but gentle peaceable free from the love of money now some of you are going I wonder who it is he wants to punch in the nose nobody here right anyway so we keep going on he can't be pugnacious but he must be gentle peaceable free from the love of money and he must be one who manages his own household well keeping his children under control with all dignity you know about those PKs right this does not mean that he has a rod of iron upon his children that just means he is setting the example at home because how can he set the example to the congregation if he is not setting the example home friend listen to me just like I'm not accountable for the reality that you might not follow the example that I set I am not held accountable for your disobedience but I am accountable to hold the example before you what you do with that based upon the conviction of the Lord was between you and the Lord so too in my home for the children that are grown now those within the home sure I have an accountability there and discipline but for those because we see this and we say that a lot of slandering with pastors well look at their family look at those PKs we all know about those PKs right listen he is to set the example in the home but it is the spirit of the Lord that brings conviction to the individual that molds the heart don't make the elder overseer pastor or shepherd put him in place of Jesus Christ in which no one else can now if he is not setting the example then all of a sudden we have an issue but here we see the character traits that are to be displayed by him now we also when we go to deacons it says likewise must be men of dignity not double tongued or addicted to much wine fond of sordid gain but holding the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience these men we will get back to that in just a minute we go down to verse 12 deacons must be the husbands of only one wife good managers of their children and their own household so we see these character traits now you need to understand here now this is where we start getting into some of the controversy of the passage because there are a lot of interpretations of this but you need to understand that when it says the husband of one wife what the word of God is really saying here because it is very clear in its wording it is not declaring now stay with me don't walk away from me in this

I want you to hear what the word of God says the wording there is that he must be a one woman man present tense right it is he is being a one woman man both for deacons and elders the implication because we're not looking at legalistic structure here we're looking at the moral attribute of the individual the implication is that he will be so one woman that he would not be lusting or looking outside of the home that he would not seek gratification for anywhere of any kind of physical desires either mentally or physically outside of the bride of his youth he will rejoice in the wife of his youth some say well this disqualifies any individual that has ever been divorced and that just with all due respect we cannot get that from this wording now some bible translators will really say you can get it where it says that he must be a good manager of his home because if a divorce has happened evidently there was not good management of the home and let's go all the way back to the garden guess where the blame falls you say well it wasn't my fault but the responsibility falls upon the man so now all of a sudden you see where the implications so be careful how we cut and divide scripture and we want it to say what it says because

I'll just be frank with you most of our interpretation of scripture is based upon historical interpretations rather than just going before the lord and saying lord what does this say it is something that has been handed down and handed down and handed down and handed down and it's not always saying that it's wrong but all I'm telling you is do your due diligence study to show yourself approved and make sure that it's accurate the wording here because I was challenged you say well pastor how did you come to this well I had a dear friend of mine one time I was on and he's not of the baptist denomination right so I mean you know forgive me for going on a school of evangelism conference with him but he and I were in a hotel room and he had all these questions he said pastor man he said I just got a problem with your interpretation of that passage and he went into it he said you're telling me a man can live however he wants to as long as he don't ever get married and he can do whatever he wants to as married all of a sudden he better he better not get divorced or he's disqualified but you get another individual he's married once that marriage falls apart he did his due diligence he did everything he could it fell apart and then he lived with one other woman he said this man lived a lot purer life than that man but you're telling me that this one's qualified and that one's not and it made me scratch my head he's as long as he never says the vows right you say it's okay it made me challenge and hey do your part and put yourself around people that challenge your interpretation scripture every now and then this is what I try to do from here but do your part so that you will know why you believe it be ready to give a defense and I went back and started reading and studying and guess what it says he needs to be a one woman man so you know what's most important do you know what's most important how does he love his wife how has he loved his wife how will he continue to love his wife we elders and deacons met this past week and we were looking at one of the applicants for the deacon that you guys had nominated to us and he was in there and we were talking to him and I love the fact that one of the elders asked the question tell me how you love your wife that's what's important that's what matters we don't want to look at this legalistic requirement I want to know where you're at today some say well this means that he must be married with that's the case then

Paul was disqualified he could have never served as an elder be careful right be careful how we interpret it I'm not saying now the application of that if that's how we want to apply that as a church guess who makes the decisions the congregation to this and why this is important right so how we apply that is our I guess we could say responsibility but we cannot say this is what it says and beat people over the head because we're going to meet somebody sometime that may challenge us who is studied what it says is there are one woman man all in all the way all the time and we move forward from there so we understand this character that begins to make them up and it is a character by the way that is exhibited to everybody in the congregation but it is displayed by the elders and deacons people who are not going to be the first controversial one you want me to take you a little step further here I told you this is the most controversial passage we will find in first

[29 : 35] Timothy and we want it to be accurate so that's the first part but look at the character we keep going down reading in verse eight deacons likewise must be men of dignity and we keep going on now pay attention to this overseers must be this deacons likewise must be this and now go down to verse 11 women must likewise be dignified now I know some of your translations have and the deacons wives but if you look at that translation if you're reading from the new king james or the king james or some other translations if you pay attention to it the deacons wives is in italics right I've I've looked at it so if you're looking at it and it says deacons wives in your translation look and you see that it is italicized and the reason it is italicized is because it is not in the original language anything that you read in scripture that is in a different font it is set apart not in the original Greek or the original Hebrew it is something that the translators feel was implied by that reality now I'm not sitting here trying to make controversy we're just sitting here trying to dig into the truth right be people who say we want to accurately know what the word of

God says because the original word just literally means woman now some historically have read this passage to say well that woman must be the deacon's wives and so that's why translators I'm not saying those translators are wrong I'm just saying that we want a literal translation that's why I read from the translation that I read from but it says women likewise so there are two ways of interpreting this passage that follows now stay with me both of these have pros and cons okay one is to interpret what follows as being applicable to deacon's wives the other one is to interpret it as it is applicable to women in general who may not hold the office of deacons but they are serving as deaconesses okay now some of you said also hey that's anarchy we're going to kick him out of the church we're going to have a vote tonight well that's the case I'm going to ask you what does the word of God say that's always going to be my question right what does scripture say so I want you to stay with me here I told you we was going to get before you get a sugar high I'll bring you down on the doctrine low okay so let's go with it let's see what it says it says women likewise now pay attention to the word likewise because when

Paul was making a transition from elders overseers to deacons he used a word likewise and now he's making another transition same thing likewise so the same word is used twice because they are transitions to two different groups of people and then here's another question that I have for you if this is the case this is by the way the only extensive teaching that we have on the office of deacons we have multiple passages that extensively teach on the office of overseer or pastor we will get to first Timothy 5 we can go into the book of Titus chapter 1 we can see it in Peter we can see it in the book of Acts we have a number of passages that tell you about the qualifications of pastors and elders do you know that in not a single passage in scripture does it ever refer to the elder's wife nowhere so if it is the case then Paul is putting a stipulation on the wife of a deacon but he is not putting any stipulations on the wife of the pastor that makes you stand up and think doesn't it if the opportunity was there was just to talk about wives of individuals then he would have connected it with elders because they are the overseers right now we're looking at deacons but we're saying well so I'm not telling you how that we're wrong in this I just want you to think through it with me right it's okay to sweat a little bit in our

Bible study and get a little uncomfortable but he is not specifically just he is introducing a new segment of people wives you say well it says the deacons must be the husband of one wife you're right they must be one women men and we understand well how can you be a husband if you're not a if you're not a man right so we have this interpretation right but there seems to be this transition and that's why some believe it is deacons wives we'll give them that because it seems to be an awkward transition of going back and forth between talking about deacons talking about women and talking about deacons again and it seems to be a little bulky I get it but then we can introduce this thing to you as well because we are not saying and the reason I say this is because the moment that some of us hear that there is a church that has female deacons referred to deaconess all of a sudden we want to cast rocks at them and tell them they're non-biblical but we need to be careful if that is how they interpret the passage and that is how they apply the interpretation of the passage then maybe that's their decision as a congregation and you'll stay the course with me here in just a minute because there is at least one woman in scripture that is referred to as a deaconess and she is referred to in the book of

Romans of all books which is the magnum opus of Paul's theology Romans chapter 16 verses 1 and 2 referred to a woman named Phoebe who is a deaconess she is referred to as a servant of the church and she is probably the very one who carried the manuscript of Romans to the church at Rome right and she is referred the word servant there is the very same word deacon now that does that mean that she held the office of deaconess but she was serving the church therefore she was a deaconess you have to stay with me till we get to the end of the passage right because we are not so certain here we cannot emphatically stake our claim and say this is what it says I have these discussion with deacons I have them with the body now our church and our bylaws it states that deacons are to be men and if that is how we want to apply that truth then that is the congregation's decision and we move forward from there but we cannot say they have to be because this is this is what it says because we need to accurately understand what it says it says women and that's it it's not attaching them in their marital status in any portion or part but it says that they must be also dignified not malicious gossips but temperate faithful in all things why doesn't it talk about how the women run their household well newflash is because in scripture women don't run the household right so he is giving character traits that match the individuals that he's talking about now if everybody's really on the edge of the seat let's go down the calling of its parts the character that makes it up number three and finally we see the charge to each individual part because by the way this last part the charge will really dictate how we interpret everything else historically and biblically it is the charge it says the overseer must then must be able to look at what it says the overseer then must be able to teach that was that one character attribute that I skipped over in the overseer the overseer elder must be able to teach this is an attribute that connected with he must have a good reputation with those outside the church that he must not be young in the faith so he does not become prideful that he must mature this is another really argument for the fact that deacon not deacons that overseers and pastors and elders must come out of the congregation not necessarily just out of the seminaries is because you don't want new believers you want people that have been raised up with believers you want people that have matured within the body the greatest education that I ever received to be a pastor was the fact that I was a part of a local body I became the pastor of the same body that I was a part of so I was first a congregant then I became a youth leader then I became a deacon and then all of a sudden I became the pastor and that congregation was really patient with me but for 10 years I served my home congregation as their pastor and that was probably the best education that I ever received for pastoral ministry you guys get the benefit of the reality that

[37:18] I came out of a church and that I was not a new convert someone who just had this great head knowledge but I had life knowledge I had you know business meetings where everybody was mad at me I had people so I had this maturity that needed to go on within my life so that I could be patient and I praise God for that congregation that walked beside me why so that I would not be prideful and fall into the same temptation that fell into Satan but look at what it says it says the overseer must be able to teach do you understand deacons and this again historically I remember when I was ordained as deacon there was an ordination council and there were individuals on that ordination council told me that I should be ready to preach for them anytime they needed me to there were other pastors that I should be able to call on you you should be able to come preach now if I was back then when I was 24 if I was back then I would look at him and say well that's not biblical the reason it's not biblical is because this passage doesn't say anything about deacons teaching it says the elders and overseers are those who are called to teach when we get to the fifth chapter you will hold them accountable based upon their preaching and by the way I don't know if you've noticed it and we have the privilege now of being in that position it is elders plural it is always a plurality more than just one it is a plurality of elders that Paul is referring to when we get to the fifth chapter you'll understand why there's a plurality of them these men ought to be able to teach it is their calling it is their charge it is the charge of the elders and pastors and shepherds and overseers to be the teachers of the congregation they ought to be listen to me friend they lead through their teaching they are the servant leaders of the church the congregation makes the decisions the elders overseers the wording is implied there the pastors lead based upon the decisions of the congregation so it does not mean that I as a pastor send up go pastoral authority this is what we're doing no I have the opportunity to say this is what the congregation wants to do so this is what we're doing you make the decision I have the responsibility to lead in that manner the other elders in our congregation have the responsibility to lead in that manner and how do we lead through our teaching right we lead through preaching teaching that is the calling of the elders that is the charge that has been given to us but we go to deacons it says deacons likewise and it gives their character traits but look at what it says for those who have served well as deacons so the charge given to deacons is to serve it is to serve the charge given to the elders and overseers is to teach and preach the charge given to deacons is to serve now very clearly we have less specific teaching on the role of deacons in scripture than anything else though it is a set apart part of the body and the reason is because their service is so broad Acts chapter 6 they're serving the tables and providing food for the widows we find them possibly given distribution of financial gain to those that are in need we see

Phoebe doing the work of a deaconess taking the manuscript to the church at Rome we see a number of things that are going on here we do not see them necessarily teaching we see Stephen he stands before the synagogue of freemen and he gives his defense sure because that is holding to the mystery of the faith that is a deacon needs to be an individual who has such a mature faith that they know the gospel that's the mystery of the faith by the way and that they understand the gospel because they are serving from the gospel and these individuals are to be those who serve so if elders and overseers are servant leaders then someone has said deacons are to be lead servants they ought to be the first ones serving they ought to lead the congregation in serving they ought to be those who come before the congregation because by the way my friend listen to me everything a deacon's called to do we're called to do to one another right we're called to love one another care for one another pray for one another serve one another we're called to do all of that what sets the deacon apart is that they are leading you and I in serving we follow them as they serve their best way to do it is they ought to be serving and serving and serving and serving and serving this is their charge now for both overseer and deacon it says deacons it tells us that they ought to be those who are tested let them first serve as deacon it says they must first also be tested then let them serve now you need to understand this again we don't get judgmental here but we understand this is testing the character of those who are serving this is not a once and done yeah they meet to test know the wording in the original languages they are to be going through an ongoing testing of their character character matters both as elders and as deacons and they ought to be those who are serving and their character matches the service to the body and it is the deacons that are encouraging others now stay with me in traditional Baptist mindset especially when it came to America deacons began to take on other charges they began to carry responsibilities of leadership of making decisions reason being is because the number of pastors was very limited that day they had circuit preachers circuit pastors circuit elders so not every congregation had an elder there would be dependent upon a preacher to come every now and then so the deacons naturally leadership does not exist in a vacuum right began to assume leadership positions and began to take on more and more responsibilities and they were given charge in the scripture and so therefore the Baptist began to really look at this and understand that this must be because the leadership overseers elders is clearly limited to men but yet we understand that with deacons there's some ambiguity here why because they are servants and therefore there's nothing wrong listen to me ladies you want to do the work of a deaconess then by all means serve some of you are doing the work of a deaconess already that does not mean we have to give you the title you're just serving I walked into the church this morning and there were a number of ladies already serving tables were being put out things were being set out so that you could come bid on some sugary sweets they were serving guess what

Thank you.