

Sermon study 1 Timothy 3:1-16 “When No One is Looking”

Use this outline as a guide. You can talk about it a different way if you like but whatever you do make sure the depth of this study is depth of APPLICATION. Do not make it your goal to get sidetracked determining the meaning. The goal is to move forward from the message into actual real life and specific application. Be creative and follow up about application. Imagine a church where the people actually applied what they learned. Wow.

The problem this sermon addresses

The ministry, effectiveness, and testimony of any church is largely a reflection of its leaders. The gospel was being undermined due to poor leadership in the church.

Today’s problem as it relates to the church is lack of qualified leadership in the church. We often consider one qualified by their capability but God seems to desire we look at their character.

Please read and discuss the following article:

<http://www.intothyword.org/apps/articles/?articleid=36562>

Is it fair to say we have a leadership crisis in the church today? Discuss.

The Central Proposition of the text:

The Character of a church is reflected in the quality of its leaders. A church led by noble Pastors and dignified Servants will be a pillar of the gospel.

Main Idea:

God’s church is not built on capability but on character.

Before going further take a moment to discuss and define character. Hint: look at the title :)

I. Noble (1 Timothy 3:1-7)

A. Paul lays out the fact that overseers are to be of noble character and then goes on to describe what this looks like.

1. The term overseer is interchangeable with the term pastor and elder.
 - a) Read Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Peter 5:1-2
 - b) What might these various terms say about the position described?
2. The term above reproach literally has to do with not allowing any handles to criticize.
 - a) Read Hebrews 13:17.
 - b) Obviously God takes this position seriously. What is most serious is how a leader can undermine his position through bad character decisions.
 - (1) Richard Baxter, a pastor in the Puritan movement of seventeenth-century England: Take heed to yourselves, lest your example contradict your doctrine, and lest you lay such stumbling blocks before the blind, as may be the occasion of their ruin; lest you unsay with your lives, what you say with your tongues; and be the greatest hinderers of the success of your own labours. ... One proud, surly, lordly word, one needless contention, one covetous action,

may cut the throat of many a sermon, and blast the fruit of all that you have been doing.

(2) Read the following examples:

(3) http://www.cbn.com/spirituallife/churchandministry/charisma_grady_haggard_scandal.aspx

(4) <http://chicago.cbslocal.com/2012/09/19/ex-pastor-pleads-guilty-to-relationship-with-underage-girl/>

(5) <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/oct/08/local/la-me-children-africa-20121008>

(6) In each of these cases discuss how character failures of these men led to the church and their work being maligned.

II. Dignified (1 Timothy 3:8-13)

A. Deacons like pastors, are called upon to have a dignified character. This is what it looks like.

1. Read Philippians 1:1. Notice there are two OFFICES to organize the church. Pastors/elders/overseers and deacons/servants/ministers
2. Read Ephesians 4:11-12. Notice that all saints are to serve.
3. Read Acts 6:1-15. All are to serve but some are called to serve in an official capacity. Notice the requirement was their good reputation.
4. 1 Timothy 3:11 refers to women/wives and their qualifications. This is not a role of leadership but specifically one of service- a great example of a female deaconess is Romans 16:1.
5. Read Mark 10:35-45. How does service give us a good standing before God?

III. A Pillar of the Gospel (1 Timothy 3:14-16)

A. Paul ends the chapter describing why this is all important, namely that this is how the church is to be organized. He then describes the church as the pillar of the truth. That is to say the church is the standard bearer for the gospel. If the leadership is poor the gospel will be harmed in its witness.

1. Read Acts 20:25-28.
 - a) Why is the church so important?
 - b) Notice the warning for the elders was for sound doctrine.

This sermon is about leaders but the qualities of a leader are simple reflections of those whom they lead. The key is character. We must be a church of character. God may use you in a bigger way than you can imagine. How are you handling what you have now?

IV. Character

A. Read Acts 4:23-31.

1. We do not display the truth of the gospel through our capability but through our character. Notice they did not pray for an easier ministry but for more boldness.
 - a) Our capability dictates we pray for lighter loads and easier service.
 - b) discuss
 - c) Our character demands we pray for stronger backs and harder servants.
 - d) discuss

B. Read Luke 16:10-13.

1. How do we go about developing character?
2. Even though character is often seen in the big moments of one's life it is formed in the small ones.
 - a) What are the small things you ought to work on? What is the current stewardship God has given you?

C. Read 2 Kings 5:1-15.

1. Do you want to do great things for God? Do the little things first.
 - a) This church is attempting to do some cool stuff but it relies on the small acts of giving and daily prayer from you guys.
 - b) It is silly to talk of doing great things for God when we are not willing to do the little things. Discuss.

D. Read John 13:1-17.

1. Is your private person the same as your public person?
2. What areas do you need to confess and to give over to God?
3. How can you serve in unseen small ways?
4. How can you specifically develop your character?
5. Here are some great resources for further study:
 - a) http://www.monergism.com/directory/link_category/Christian-Character/

Thank you for letting me be your pastor. It is a great privilege.

Take a moment and discuss how you might thank those who serve the church in hidden ways. Also pray for Matt C., Melissa H., Scott V., Brett S. - these saints serve you well and they have great integrity.

Make sure to thank God for pastor Paul R., a man with great integrity.