

Restoration Revisited (6): Take Me to Your Leader

1 Timothy 5:17)

I. Introduction

- A. Three months after being hired as youth guy, I got unexpected promotion
1. I became the “*interim preacher*.” We’re all interim, but what to call me
 - a. Lloyd gave me a desk nameplate, “*Charles R. Tucker, Evangelist*”
 - b. But in the directory and bulletin, I was listed as the “*preacher*.”
 - c. On church letterhead and my business card, I was the “*minister*”
 2. I don’t use any title (“*Holy Right Reverend*”). *What will you call me?*
 - a. **Pastor?** That really a designation for elders or bishops (**1 Pet 5:1-2**)
 - 1) Our preachers used that title (Presbyterian “*ruling vs teaching*”)
 - 2) We have cross-pollination with Mormons; is that same thing
 - b. **Minister?** Well, δίακονος is the word for “*deacon*” (**Rom 16:1**)
 - c. **Preacher?** Only Noah and Paul are called “*preachers*” (**2 Pet 2:5**)
 - d. **Evangelist?** Only title in the NT... and it’s for a deacon (**Acts 21:8**)
 3. This is way more complicated than you thought it was, right?
 - a. I asked a group of preachers how they answer, “*What do I call you*”
 - b. One of them said, “*I tell people to call me just Woody.*”
 - c. So from now on, just call me “*Woody.*” Or *Holy Right Reverend*”
- B. We continue with “*Restoration Revisited: Being the NT Church Today*”
1. In the past, “restoration” was seen as finding/following the right pattern
 - a. For some, that is having one communion cup (“*he took the cup*”)
 - 1) Is a cup really a cup if it doesn’t have a handle? That’s a glass!
 - 2) That’s the problem with pattern & forms; we can agree on them
 - b. What if restoration is about the power and passion of NT church
 - c. Statue may have the form of a horse— but it has no vigor, no life
 2. We’ve been looking at several things about the church in the NT
 - a. Today we ask, “*What did leadership look like in the NT church?*”
 - b. Not what was its form or format? What was the essence and power?
 - c. We’ll look this morning mainly at one verse on elders—**1 Tim 5:17**
 3. Maybe we need to rethink how we see elders. *Five different points*
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II. Take Me to Your Leader

- A. **First**, elders in the NT church were often paid (1 Tim 5:17, NLT)
1. He then quotes Deut 25, “*Do not muzzle the ox while it treads grain*”
 - a. Then he quotes Jesus as saying, “*The worker deserves his wages*”
 - b. We don’t generally pay elders, but something should “*click*” here
 - 1) Peter warns elders not to be “*greedy for money*” (1 Pet 5:2)
 - 2) Paul says the same in “*qualification lists*” (1 Tim 3:2, Titus 1:7)
 2. Why warnings on money? Elders were paid! *Don’t be in it for money!*
 - a. Alexander Campbell thought preachers should have outside income
 - b. Must be free to say what might get you fired (“*moving sermon*”)
- B. **Second**, there seems an overlap in the roles of elder/preacher (5:17, NIV)
1. Who is paid? Elders. Who is paid better? Those who preach and teach
 - a. My job is to preach and teach (and I’m paid better than the elders)
 - b. The job of elders? Direct the affairs of church... and preach & teach
 2. **Point:** We make distinction between two roles that are more blended
 - a. Where do churches find preachers? Classified ad? Order online?
(*ACU has website of preachers/churches; Christian Chronicle has classified*)
 - b. What about NT church? There were no seminaries to train/advertise
 - 1) Church got preachers just like elders. They grew their own
 - 2) Someone in the church showed a gift and then grew into the role
 - 3) Later they would grow into eldering. That the guy in this text
- C. **Third**, this suggests a basic job description for church leaders (5:17, NET)
1. Elders both provide effective leadership **AND** teaching and preaching
 - a. Do all elders have both gifts? Do all have equal portions of the gifts
 - b. God gives different gifts—serve, encourage, teach, give, leadership
 - 1) One may have the gift of leading; another has gift of teaching
 - 2) If they have both? That’s the person in our text teach and lead
 - c. **Caveat:** Some people think they have a gift but don’t (1 Tim 1:7)
 2. Understand, there are different kinds of leadership and teaching styles
 - a. Some people can lead a small group that would be terrified up front
 - b. I’m terrified that more of you will find out how easy it is up he

D. **Fourth**, elders are called to lead people, not plans & programs (**5:17**, CSV)

1. I've used different versions for variety; whole sermon is from a verse
 - a. Several versions give us false idea when we read with modern eyes
 - 1) What might "*the elders who rule well*" (esv) cause us to think?
 - 2) What does "*direct the affairs of the church*" (NIV) imply suggest?
 - b. Kittel: The word was nautical "*to make headway or to forge ahead*"
 - c. Simply put, this word means to lead, to go before, to get out in front
2. Look at the character traits or "*qualifications*" in **1 Tim 3:4-5** (NCV)
 - a. Elders are to manage, lead or take care of their own families, right?
 - b. Why? So they'll know how to manage, lead or care for church
 - 1) What do they manage, lead or take care of at home? People
 - 2) Elders don't lead, manage or care for programs. It's people.
3. Elders are shepherd, not the corporate management board of the church
 - a. They don't hold meetings and make decisions. They care for people
 - b. Example: If you're sick and need prayer, you call elder (**Jam 5:14**)

E. **Fifth**, elders who serve are important part of God's plan (**Titus 1:5**)

1. Titus was to finish and put things in order at Crete—appoint elders
 - a. What follows is list of character traits or "*qualifications*" for elders
 - b. It's very similar to the list in 1 Timothy, but it is not identical
2. We'll come back to the list, but notice Paul's transition (**Titus 1:9**)
 - a. Then he warns about the false teachers bothering the church (**1:10**)
 - b. Some opposed "*sound doctrine*" or "*wholesome teaching*" (NLT)
 - c. What happens if you compare the elders with the false teachers?
 - 1) Notice the difference in their teaching (**Titus 1:9,11**)
 - 2) Notice the difference in their motivation (**Titus 1:7, 11**)
 - 3) Notice the difference in their use of alcohol (**Titus 1:7:12**)
 - 4) Notice the difference in the fitness for service (**Titus 1:7, 16**)
3. The character and qualities of the leaders are the solution to problem
 - a. What was it that stood between the church and getting off track?
 - b. It was the character and faithfulness and perseverance of its elders

III. Let Us Pray

God of the Heavens, Ruler of All Things, Ancient of Days, Father—

We are thankful today for this spiritual family in which you have placed us so that we can share in Your eternal glory and fellowship. Father God, we pray that you will empower us to live in the unity You created at the cross and give us through the Spirit that indwells each of us and all of us as Your body. Give us Your Divine Love so that we may more and more live out the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Father, today we give You thanksgiving for these men who serve as elders, pastors and overseers. Help us to follow them in the same spirit of humility and obedience in which they serve You. Give us patience when they seem to lead in a direction or at a pace that differs from what we would have chosen. Give them patience and power to lead us when we make that task more difficult than it should be. Forgive us, Father, whenever we resist or rebel against their oversight; help us to see that in resisting them, we are resisting You.

Father God, we pray that you will strengthen our elders when their task is discouraging and difficult. We pray that you empower them not to weary in well-doing. Father, help us not to just appreciate their work, but to let them know that they are appreciated. And strengthen us so that we are ready today and at all times to lift up their hands so that their task is a joy and never a burden.

Almighty God, we pray today that You will give our elders the wisdom to lead us where you are leading them. Give them the courage to move onward when the path is difficult. Give us both the determination and the humility to serve and to grow as we all follow You together. And Father of Mercy, help us to understand that following in Your old paths through the wilderness of this world is often an undiscovered country that is neither comfortable nor familiar.

God of our fathers, we also give You thanks for all of those past leaders who have gone on before us and have left for us both a history and a heritage of faith. Help us to be informed by that history and heritage but help us to faithfully follow You wherever You are calling us in this present day. Father, we are thankful that our future is always defined and only defined by You and in You.

O, Good Shepherd, continue to bless these men who shepherd us. Give them vision as they equip us and release us to more faithful service together in Your kingdom and for Your glory.

For Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever.

Amen