



Sermon - 07/02/2017

*1 Timothy 3:1 - 12*

*2 Kings 17:7 - 8*

I decided that after two weeks of preaching on women it would be wise to take three weeks off. But I did learn a fundamental truth on our camping trip. We stopped in Clarendon, Texas to eat at the Three Hearts Steak Restaurant and what I learned there in the restroom facility a fundamental truth. You went back into the restroom facility it said, "Men to the left, because women are always right." So learned that truth. I appreciate Dr. Gage filling in for me. Errol did a great job. That's his real name. He loves that name. Let me tell you a little bit about Errol. I have to, I'm teaching in a couple weeks at Southwestern Seminary, I'm teaching the Greek of 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus to a group of 11 young men that are coming through the Doctor of Ministry cohort and another professor and I, they have to grade two, they have to preach two sermons and we grade their sermons. I can't wait to be on that side of the table. But in doing that, they made me an adjunct professor at Seminary and so I had to turn in a vita. I don't even know what that is. So I ask for Dean's. I get Dean's vita. Now what it is is it's a listing of your awards and the society's you're a part of and all the things you've done, all your degrees. Dean's vita is about 83 pages. He literally had a listing of like 12 honor societies. I've never even sniffed an honor society. So I'm looking at this thing thinking, "Ok. All I've got is pastor at Central." But I thought, "I know how to do this." So I've been here 31 years so what I did is I just put "Pastor at Central - '86 - '87. Pastor at Central - '87 - '88. Pastor at Central - '89 - '90." And I'm pretty much the same length as Dean! So I'm feeling really good about it.

Now we're going to look today at, we're at a place in Timothy where Paul's telling Timothy what to do with the leadership in the church. How they are to live. One of the reasons it's taking me years to go through 1 Timothy is I kind of thought at first that this was really only applicable to those of us on staff and those that are deacons. And that's always going to be a small minority in a church. Now but I realize something in walking through it that, as a matter of fact, it's the opposite issue. It's for every single one of us. Now so we're going to start in 1 Timothy 3. Now we're not having church this Wednesday night, July 4<sup>th</sup> week, but the next Wednesday night, we finished the Old Testament, we're going to start on the New Testament. I'm doing a book every Wednesday night, walking through. So we'll start Matthew in a couple of weeks. But next Wednesday night I'm going to take and walk through the scripture as to what elders, deacons, staff, pastor, all those things look like inside the scripture which we simply don't have time to do today. But we are going to look at the passage in front of us.

Now it does have bearing on everybody in the room. Look at the first verse of chapter 3.

<sup>1</sup>If anyone desires to be an elder or to be an overseer, he desires a good work.

Now obviously deacons and elders are coming out of this room. They don't come outside. They come out of here. So if you are not embracing these qualities that are mentioned for the elders and deacons then we can't find elders and deacons in this church. So you have to embrace the categories that he lays out here. My first church, Oakwood, was a great church. I mean sweet people, I was there a year and a half, really, really sweet people. But we didn't really, it was not a church that could produce either elders or deacons. Number one I think I told you, I had, I had a meeting, and I said, "Look we don't have any deacons. Let's there are a couple of you that are older deacons, let's meet, let's elect a couple of new deacons, and let's do something." And when I finished my little things one of the deacons looked at me and said, "You know, preacher, I don't do anything, he doesn't do anything, if we elect two more people they won't do anything. I don't see the point." It's hard to argue with that. So we packed that one down. So we had no deacons. And really they didn't even care about having an elder or a pastor because when I went there, two guys met me the Sunday before. I had preached at First Baptist Centerville and they said, "Hey we want you to come preach next Sunday." And that was the extent of the conversation. And when I was sitting on the platform the next Sunday morning, first time, my wife's down here, I'm sitting on the platform, my last semester in seminary, and the guy gets up and he says, "Brother Osborne's here today in view of a call." And I remember thinking maybe I misheard that. Sunday night, sure enough, they gave me a call to the ministry. They had no idea what I believed; what I believed in the scripture, in Jesus, or Buddha, they had no idea. But they wouldn't have to find somebody to preach every Sunday morning, every Sunday night, every Wednesday night. I would handle that now for the \$50 a week and \$25 car allowance that I was getting. I remember when the cops pulled me over coming out of Fairfield, Texas and he wrote me a ticket and then he noticed on my license, he said, "You live in Fort Worth? What are you doing down here?" And I said, "I pastor Memorial Baptist in Oakwood." And he tore the ticket up and he said, "Shoot, son, you need the money." So there are going to be some churches out there that don't produce elders and deacons. You want to be a church that quality inside produces both those.

So, a lot of words here, lot of phrases, but it boils down to a couple of things. And it's telling to me, before we go there, you stay where you are, but I'm going to read you a unique little statement out of 2 Kings 17. You stay where you are in 1 Timothy because I want you to listen. I have a major point I want to drive home today. Now listen to this.

<sup>7</sup>This disaster happened

Now that is that the northern 10 tribes, Assyria came in, took them out of Israel, took them home, stuck them all over the empire, so basically the identity as a Jew is lost because now they've gotten inter-married.

It happened because the people of Israel sinned against the Lord their God,

Now listen to this. Here's the basis of their sin. Now listen.

<sup>8</sup>They lived according to the customs of the nations that the Lord had dispossessed before the Israelites and according to what the kings of Israel did.

Now here's what he says. He says the Jews took on the culture and its belief and the kings didn't stop it. The nation of Israel took on the culture of its day and that culture drove them to do things God didn't honor. And then he says the leadership didn't stop it. And therefore, God had to deal with his people. Now I'm going to walk you real quickly through basically a couple of categories that these list of words fit into. When we get done with that there's something in here that is never mentioned. That is the single most important thing in our culture, it's never mentioned in these verses, it is what is driving a number of young pastors today; this issue in our culture and not what is here. Now there are a couple categories. Number one. The category of the family. Look in verse 4:

<sup>4</sup>And that he would manage his own household well, having children in submission with all dignity, <sup>5</sup>if he does not know how to lead his own house, how in the world will he know and be able to care for the church of God?

And then when you go to the deacons it virtually talks about the same thing. He talks about the fact that these are to be men, look in verse 12:

<sup>12</sup>Ministers let them be, deacons let them be, husbands of one wife, ruling their children well and their own households.

Now he changes, adds a little caviat, to the overseer, but basically here's what he says. Now he says a couple things. He says, number one, literally in the Greek, both phrases are the same. It says, in the Greek, a man of one woman. That is what is the Greek text says written and inspired by the Holy Spirit of God. Gentlemen when you marry, you are of one woman. Your desires physically are a one woman. Your deepest emotional connection is with one woman. Doesn't mean you're not going to connect with others, doesn't mean you're not going to know other women, but you are going to deepest connect with one woman. You're going to desire one woman. She's the paramount drive in your life other than Christ. That's the ruling for me and it's a ruling for deacons, it is a ruling for every staff male here. We have that responsibility. I was amazed when Vice President Pence said that he, now obviously he works with a lot of different women, but he said, "I do not eat lunch alone with any woman other than my wife." I understood the left wing media going nuts because they go nuts over everything. I get that. But what blew me away was the state paper of Texas Baptists, the Baptist General Convention of Texas, we're not a part of that convention, but the editor of that paper blasted Pence for his stance. Let me tell you something. If you're a man of one woman then you don't lunch with anybody but your wife. So I don't understand how a believer can stand against what the scripture's very clearly saying.

Number two: he says your children are to live in submission. Now I don't know what it is with us, but basically what I heard growing up was if the preacher kids sinned that the preacher was disqualified. Do you know why the overseer and the deacons were put together? Because generally preachers' kids sinned because they run with deacons' kids. If you have children, I

have breaking news for you, I know how cute they can be, they are wicked, foul, vile, little sinners. And it will not take long before you discover that. Now here's the really bad thing about having children. It will hit a crescendo and about the time you get them fixed they go off to college and leave you with a massive debt. Your children are going to sin. It is not the idea that preachers' kids won't sin. We have a number of young people on staff now; some single, some married, some may get married. They're going to have children; they're kids are going to sin. It does not mean their kids don't sin. What it does mean for the overseer particularly, he must deal with that sin in his home. He can't let it go. He can't ignore it. He has to deal with it and that is the responsibility for all of us. We deal with the sin in our children. Your kids are going to sin. And the overseer has to be able to deal with it because he's going to have to deal with sin in the church. He's not going to have a church members that don't sin. Sooner or later he's going to have somebody in his office that's in an affair, or they've done something, and he's got to deal with that sin. So part of my responsibility is that. We have to make sure, first category, is that our homes are intact in our marriage, that our homes are intact with our family. We have to make sure as men that we do that. If we do not have those kinds of homes, we can never produce overseers, we can never produce the deacons we need in a church setting. So number one; family has to be intact.

Second category, last part of verse 2, says that the overseer must be apt to teach. And then look in verse 9 for the deacon:

<sup>9</sup>holding the mystery of the faith in a clean conscience.

Now the mystery, all that Greek word means, something you can't figure out that God has to reveal to you. The mystery of the faith with a clean conscience means what I know about the Bible I live out in my life. So that my conscience does not disagree with what I claim to have. Now what is the mystery of faith? Look in verse 16. He kind of gives you a mini-systematic theology. He talks about Christ. He says he was manifested in the flesh, he was justified in the spirit, he appeared to angels, talks about the fact that he was preached among the Gentiles, he was believed on in the world, and he was taken up in glory. What we do is we have a certain kernel in a belief system that the deacons have to hold to and those of us that oversee the church have to be able to teach with clarity and understanding. And there are certain fundamental things. If you go into my man cave you'll find on the credenza behind my desk a couple Lord's Supper cups and five stones that I took out of the Valley of Elah every year when we go to Israel. Because those five stones remind me of five core principles that I wrap my life around. And I think we have to wrap our lives around here: God's God, number one, Genesis 1, he is sovereign, he is all-mighty God, nobody's taking him off his throne. Number two: the Bibles true. 2 Peter 1:20-21: scripture's inspired by the Holy Spirit. He used men, but he wrote it. This book is absolutely true. Number three: Colossians 1; Jesus Christ is everything the Bible says he is. Number 4: Matthew 16, the church is undefeatable. Little League will lose. God's house will not. Number 5: Revelation 19 – 22, he's on the way back. So we're locking that down. We're holding that mystery. We have a deacon that doesn't believe those things, he can't be a deacon. And the overseers, your staff, have to have the ability to teach those things in a clear understanding way.

Thirdly, a lot of words here, right. Listen to these: blameless, serious, sober, sound mind, interesting Greek word in verse 2, *kosmeón*, it's a Greek word that comes from the Greek word, *kósmos*, for the world, but it's an interesting word because the idea is, it's not even a religious word, it was a philosophical word, that Socrates, Aristotle, and the others used. It was the idea that I'm in control of my life in such a way that everybody respects who I am even if they hate my Jesus. All these different words; serious, dignified, on and on and on, for both deacon and pastor and staff. Every word, not addicted to wine, can have some alcohol, but it can't control you, not greedy for false gain, not hungry after money. The idea in all these words, the third category is there is nothing outside of Jesus in control of my life. He controls it. His character put in me through the power of the Holy Spirit is what consumes and controls my life. Nothing else. So church has to have overseers, elders, staff, deacons. They have to be Godly family people. They have to hold the mystery of the faith. And God's character has to be formed in them. Now listen. None of those three things does our society value today. They don't like what you believe about Jesus Christ because you think he's the only way. They don't like that. So the mystery of the faith you hold, they don't like. They like it when you fail. They don't care anything, you can just be controlled by something that doesn't matter, you just need to go to therapy and you're fine. They don't care if as a leader your family is in disarray. Doesn't matter. As long as one thing's true. One thing that is the driving ethic of our culture today. I have to be successful. We have a former president who's approval rating sometimes hit as high as 67%/68% which is incredible because he's trashed his family, he has no control over anything in his life, his impulses drive him, and he certainly does not hold the mystery of the faith with a clean conscience because nothing he believe about Jesus is transferred into his life. But he was imminently viewed as a success. So we don't care about the other things in this culture. So you understand, now listen to me, you understand when you leave this room, you're walking into the world that is not going to value what you value. The Bible never says a thing to the overseer, it never says a thing to the deacon about being successful. It talks about God's character implemented in your home, in your life, and in what you believe about Christ. It is not your success that matters, it is your character.

I grew up loving Tom Landry, coach of the Cowboys back when God did watch through the hole in the roof, doesn't any more, but he did back then. Landry was a great man. His family was intact, he held the truth of the scripture, and he was in total control of his life. Drove me crazy that he couldn't win the big game. I remember in '67, the Ice Bowl, we're playing Green Bay. Jerry Kramer blocks, Bob Lilly knocks him down, Leroy Jordan does not fill the hole, Bart Starr scores and wins it, the end of the game. But I'm not bitter. I want you to know I'm not bitter. It did make me mad, though, I had to do the funeral for one of the linebackers for the Green Bay Packers a few years back. And all the guys that I hated growing up were there at the funeral. But it drove me crazy because my thought process as a kid was, "You know, God, he's so loves you, why don't you let him win the big game?" And that was the big argument for Landry for years that he couldn't win the big game. He did win the Super Bowl in '72 when he beat Miami and we killed them. Now but it drove me crazy because my assumption was what you see at the end of the movie, Facing the Giants. That's a great flick except for one thing; when they really do decide to develop the character of God in their team, all of a sudden the next thing is they've won two state championships. Because the idea is if I really embrace the character of God, then what really will happen is I will be successful at the end of my life. There is nothing in the word of God that demands you be successful. It demands that you allow the character of God to form

in your life. You let God worry about whether or not you're successful. That's the game. You say, "Well how does success fit in there and what am I supposed to do?" Let me tell you something. You give me, and here's what's driving me crazy, we're so success-driven, we're firing high school football coaches now. I understand firing Saban. He makes \$7 million a year. Yeah! He ought to be producing. I get it. Pro – maybe. But high school. These guys are limited to what they've got. They could have 11 Chris Osbornes. They've got to deal with what they've got to deal with. But you give me a high school football coach who models a Godly home, who is not controlled by his impulses, who holds the truth we hold dear passionately with a clean conscience, and you let him high school football coach and 10 or 12 young men show up on that team who have no home life, they don't even know who their dad is, their mom's a crack-addict, they have no idea what's going on, they've been living with their grandmother, they have no idea what's right and wrong, I want him in their life. I don't care whether he wins another game or not. I want his character in their life. You say, "Well how do you handle success? What do you do? What is right and wrong about success?" Let me tell you, here's what it is. If you're a high school football coach and you hold those three things and you're impacting these kids, the Bible says that you work out of your soul. That is, you work out of your relationship with Christ. So if you're a high school football coach you do everything you can to make that team successful on Friday night. You get the best quarterback; you teach him how to throw, you teach him how to read the defenses. You get the best linemen you can. You teach the running back what hole. You figure out, you strategize, what are they good at, what are they weak at, you figure out what plays are going to work best, you do everything you can so that on Friday night those kids have the best chance of success you can give them. But buddy whether they fail or win is up to Christ and what happens because God is more interested in his character showing up than whether or not you win. Great thing about Tom Landry, all those losses in the biggest games, he never lost who he was in Christ. And his standards of decency held up and I'm telling you it is not whether or not we win or lose; it's whether or not we stand for Christ or don't. It is his character, not our success. And if he makes you successful great. If you don't have success great but either way when you come to Friday night and you've got your kids best prepared, and they don't win and you come home, you still honor then model Jesus whether you win or whether you lose. I don't care what kind of company you've got. I don't care if you're a lawyer, professor, I don't care what you do. You allow God to handle your success. You worry about his character in your soul.

What bothers me is young pastors coming out today are all about success. My kids live in the Metroplex and they have enormous difficulty finding anybody who will do expositional preaching because the young guys coming up want a number of people to come hear them. They're not interested in deepening who does come here. When I die and I stand before Jesus Christ, he's not going to evaluate me by how many people came to hear me preach. He will evaluate me on whether or not your life was changed because I opened his Word in a way you can understand it. That is my judgment. We've lost that because our young kids are coming out committed to success, not to character. And I'm going to tell you, God's idea of success is not always funny. Book of Acts, what city does it start in? Where's it start? OK. It's not a trick question. Go with me. Big city in Israel. Jerusalem. You can see people going. Jerusalem. Who's the hot preacher at the beginning of Acts? Peter. Now we're getting brave. Now we're quick. How many people are saved when he preaches his first sermon? 3,000. Successful? Yeah pretty much. He'd be doing all the church growth conferences. Do the bulk of those

people stay in Jerusalem or do they leave? They leave. Now the church gets up to 5,000 a couple of chapters later in Jerusalem. But the bulk of those 3,000 leave. That's probably, we think, how the church in Rome was founded is a bunch of people there, remember it says they spoke in tongues heard in their own language the gospel, they took it back to Rome, gathered together, and started a church that Paul wrote one of the most powerful letters he's ever written in the Bible; to them. And he winds up in jail there. And they come and visit him. But that church was probably formed out of the people that left on that day Peter preached and 3,000 were saved. Where does the book of Acts end? What city does it end in? Rome. Who's the hot preacher at the end of the book of Acts? Paul. You know what Peter was called to? He was called to a ministry of abject failure. His highest moment didn't benefit Jerusalem. It benefited Paul's ministry because those people went out where Paul started churches. His most powerful moment benefited Paul. Now they will both die at the same time. Basically Peter's life was preaching to a group of people who despise everything he says. You say, "Well Paul had a great successful ministry." Yeah. Go back and read 2 Corinthians 11; shipwrecked, beaten, over and over and over, said, "I spend a night and a day floating in the ocean", fought wild beasts in Ephesus. They probably sewed him up in skins and let the dogs loose on him. I mean this guy, most of us in here don't want that kind of success. So understand what he thinks is successful in your life may not what you think. And you work hard, you do everything you can do, you use your gifts, you use your talents, you use them to the max, but at the end of the day, ladies and gentlemen, we don't reflect God's glory when we're successful, we reflect God's glory when we honor him whether we are or aren't and that is the calling in these books and that is to drive us in this room.

Let's pray.

Father, again, thank you for reminding us you handle the success, you make us do what we need to do, but you handle the success or the failure in our eyes. Father all we'll worry about is making sure your character forms inside of us. Honor us in that endeavor and in that drive. In Jesus Christ name.