

Faith Talk

Sunday. October 25, 2026

Series. Titus: A Healthy Church in a Chaotic Culture

Sermon. The Leaders: Character and Courage

Scripture. Titus 1:5

The reason I left you in Crete was to set right what was left undone and, as I directed you, to appoint elders in every town.

Scripture. Titus 1:9

holding to the faithful message as taught, so that he will be able both to encourage with sound teaching and to refute those who contradict it.

Sermon Summary

Building a healthy church starts with blameless leadership, and Paul gives Titus a very clear picture of what that looks like.

An elder is not just someone with a title; he is a man whose life, family, and character all point in the same direction as his teaching. Paul lists seventeen qualities that define a faithful elder; and most focus on who he *is* before what he *does*: blameless, self-controlled, hospitable, holy, and courageous enough to both encourage with sound doctrine and rebuke those who contradict it.

Character and courage go together; a leader who has one without the other will eventually fail the church.

Paul then contrasts faithful elders with the false teachers troubling the churches in Crete, men who were rebellious, deceptive, and greedy, whose teaching led people toward sin rather than godliness.

The test is simple: if a teacher's words lead to sinful living according to God's Word, the teaching is false, no matter how convincing it sounds.

Every leader ultimately falls short, which is why the church's ultimate hope rests in Jesus, the chief Shepherd, holy and unstained, whose perfect life and sacrificial death accomplished what no amount of religious effort ever could.

The call is for all of us is to pray for our elders and staff, evaluate every voice shaping our faith by whether it matches Scripture and produces godliness in both the teacher and the hearer, and pursue that same list of elder qualities in our own lives.

Discussion Questions

Conversations with Adults

1. Paul lists seventeen characteristics for elders — most of them are about who a person *is*, not just what they can *do*. Why do you think character matters so much in a teaching or leadership role, and where have you seen that play out in real life?
2. Paul says a clear sign of false teaching is that it leads people toward sin rather than godliness. What practical ways do you filter the voices and teachers that shape your faith, and how do you know when something doesn't pass the test?
3. The sermon closed with a challenge to pray for your elders and staff by name this week. Who specifically comes to mind, and what would you pray for them?

Conversations with Youth

1. Paul says you can identify false teachers by their character and the fruit of their teaching. What does it look like to evaluate a teacher or influencer by those two things rather than just by how popular or persuasive they are?
2. The sermon said a faithful leader needs both sound teaching *and* the courage to say hard things; being nice isn't enough. Have you ever seen someone avoid saying a hard truth to keep the peace? What happened?
3. The list of elder qualities also shows what a mature Christian looks like. Which characteristic on that list do you most want to grow in, and why?

Conversations with Kids

1. The pastor said a good leader needs to be honest, kind, self-controlled, and devoted to God. Why do you think all of those things matter — and can you think of someone in your life who shows those qualities?
2. Paul says false teachers say one thing but live another way. Why is it important that a person's life matches what they teach?
3. If someone asked you how to know whether a teacher is telling the truth about God, what would you say?

Prayer

*Father, **thank You** for the gift of faithful elders and staff, men and women of character who have given their lives to teaching Your Word, protecting Your church, and living in a way that points others to You. Thank You that You are the chief Shepherd, the only One who has led, taught, and lived with perfect purity, and that Your cross cleanses what no amount of religious effort ever could.*

***We ask** You to protect our elders and staff; keep them blameless, courageous, and grounded in sound doctrine. Give us, as a congregation, the wisdom to recognize faithful teaching when we hear it, and the courage to hold to it when the world pushes back.*

***We commit** to praying for our leaders by name, asking hard questions of the voices that shape our faith, and pursuing the character on that list in our own lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.*
