

Politically Incorrect

The Shepherd's Mantle-Part 1

Titus 1:5

If you ever have the idea that we live in a strange, confused world where religious beliefs are more bizarre than believable – if you've come to the conclusion that the gospel is desperately needed to both liberate and redeem a culture from utter decay, now is that time.

In fact, it has always been "that time."

Go back into Grecian history 2,000 years ago and travel back in time to a flourishing civilization on the Island of Crete where worship of Dionysius was prominent. Remains of a temple to this Greek god are still visible.

His father was Zeus, the chief God of the Greeks. But the birth of Dionysius was anything but normal. While his mother was carrying him, Zeus decided to kill her, but first snatched from her womb the preborn body of Dionysius and then just before incinerating her with his blazing glory, Zeus had the baby sown into his own thigh until time to be born. The infant god in the thigh of Zeus was to become a world ruler. But if that isn't strange enough, just after the infant is born, he is kidnapped by the sons of the earth known as Titans, who didn't want to be ruled by this god, and they cooked little Dionysius and ate him. However, his heart was rescued just in time by Zeus who swallowed it and then reconstructed the body of Dionysius. Zeus then blasted the Titans with lightning and from their ashes mankind evolved - which was for centuries the Greeks theory of origins.

Dionysius grows up to create a religion of ecstasy and emotionalism, saturated with drunkenness and sexual immorality. In fact, wine was such a critical part of this religion that Dionysius became known as the god of wine.

The Romans picked up the religion from there and named this same god, Bacchus. Bacchus was the Roman wine god. People involved in the religion engaged in ecstatic orgies of demonic possession and sexual perversion in a state of drunkenness.

They believed that religion was a transcendent experience and drunkenness allowed you to achieve communion with the deities by losing any and all inhibitions.

Like the personal testimony of Steve Jobs, whose biography I completed only recently – his version of Buddhism and supposed elevated spiritual consciousness involved dropping acid and other mind altering drugs so that he could enter a state of mind where he believed he engaged with the spirit world.

That's really not a new practice.

For the followers of Bacchus, their drug was alcohol, and the lost all forms of restraint in their so-called worship.

In one excavated temple, you can see in the main section of the temple the remains of a well built in the floor in the center of the room. That colorfully tiled well – designed with grape vines and naked figures – was located there for the worshippers engaged in one of their drunken, sexually saturated orgies to literally vomit their food and drink they were gorging themselves on, so that they could go back and do it all over again.ⁱ

Their vomit was literally viewed as a pleasing offering to their god.

30 years or so before the message of the gospel came to the Island of Crete, several Jews had traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of Pentecost.

And on that day, they heard a message by a converted fisherman named Peter and they were born again by faith in Jesus Christ, their Messiah.

They returned to their island and continued spreading the truly liberating gospel of Christ.

Thirty years later, the Apostle Paul visited the island along with a young man named Titus.

More than likely, Paul visited Crete after being released from his first imprisonment where for 2-3 years he had been able to travel and preach. Paul would be imprisoned again after this brief parole and eventually executed in Rome at Nero's order.ⁱⁱ

We're not told how long Paul stayed on the island of Crete. But we can only imagine the mission field.

The wine industry of Crete was famous – drunkenness was an epidemic.ⁱⁱⁱ

Deception had become the reputation of Cretans throughout the civilized world . . . and their sexually driven religion would certainly lure someone's interest and devotion far more than a gospel that called for repentance and self-restraint and holy living.

But the gospel had taken root! The Spirit of God had transformed the lives of people who had seen enough of Dionysius to know that peace and satisfaction weren't found at the bottom of a bottle; that sacrifices to him were only self-destructing . . . that one orgy after another had only left them more empty and alone than before.

Churches began springing up . . . assemblies devoted to this new teaching from untrained Apostles and messengers had begun flourishing.

But they were in serious jeopardy . . . their spiritual health was hanging in the balance. False teachers had begun their deceptive work . . . leaderless congregations were open prey to myths and speculations.

What the church on the island of Crete needed – was spiritual leadership.

And so Paul tells *Titus in chapter 1 and verse 5, "this is the reason I left you in Crete, Titus, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you."*

Listen, the church in Crete needed the same thing the church needs today – men, led by God's spirit, committed to the scriptures, uncompromising in their gospel; fearless in their doctrine; blameless in their pattern of living and pure in their personal relationships.

But what the church needed then and what she needs today is the same thing. The church needs shepherds . . . men who will wear the mantle of leadership – understanding the gravity of it and accepting the responsibilities of it – men who will feed the sheep and shepherd and protect and nurture the flock of God.

I couldn't help but chuckle over the courage of a recent ad I read for Levi-Strauss – a company that makes jeans for men, among a host of other clothing items.

I actually found it hard to imagine a company willing to be so politically incorrect – especially in our confused culture where sexual identity is blurred if not completely erased.

They called their commercial ad a Man-ifesto (emphasis on Man) and it read – if you can believe it:

Once upon a time, men wore the pants, and wore them well. Women rarely had to open doors, and little old ladies never had to cross the street alone. Men took charge because that's what they did. But somewhere along the way the world decided it no longer needed men. Disco by disco, latte by non-fat latte, men were stripped of their khakis and left stranded on the road between boyhood and androgyny (which means, neither masculine nor feminine). Levi Strauss wasn't finished with the ad, by the way.

It continued – But today, there are questions our genderless society has no answers for. The world sits idly by as cities crumble, children misbehave and those little old ladies remain on one side of the street. For the first time since bad guys, we need heroes. We need grownups. We need men to put down the plastic fork, step away from the salad bar and untie the world from the tracks of complacency. It's time to get your hands dirty. It's time to answer the call of manhood. It's time to wear the pants.^{iv}

I'm surprised somebody didn't sue Levi-Strauss for emotional duress. How dare they suggest men oughtta lead and protect and help women – what's this about some kind of unique call to manhood?

Good for Levi-Strauss . . . I'm going to wear khakis more often in honor of them.

We're actually going to talk about what it means to answer the call to manhood when we get to chapter 2 where Paul delivers a radically counterculture definition through Titus to the church; and he'll do the same thing for women.

But first and foremost, Paul is going to tell Titus to identify men who are effectively willing and qualified to wear the pants in the assembly over whom God has given them authority and leadership and care.

From the outset of this letter – get ready for a politically incorrect message.

In fact, you talk today about male headship – male leadership – not only in the home but in the church, you are becoming even more politically incorrect inside the evangelical church as you are in the world.

But if Paul could tell Titus to create this kind of culture, inside the church of the redeemed, located on the Island of Crete, surrounded by sexual confusion and religious perversion, he certainly expects we can do the same today by the redeeming, life-transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

So get ready for some politically incorrect messages.

Now you might notice that all is not well on the island of Crete among the Christians.

You'll notice again in *verse 5 that Paul tells Titus to set in order what remains.*

This phrase “*set in order*” comes from the Greek verb, orthow (ορθοω) which we use in orthopedics.^v

The word was used by the Greeks to speak of setting broken bones or straightening out crooked ones.^{vi}

The verb *orthow* is also used today in the word orthodontics.

My wife and I invested heavily in the practice of one particular orthodontist in town. I have often told my daughters they have \$4,000 dollar smiles . . . so don't hold back.

I had braces too growing up.

In those days, none of it was flexible or plastic . . . you didn't choose colors for spacers . . . you had one color and it was shiny metal . . . you were called Rin Tin Tin for a reason.

I had really pronounced overbite and by the time I was in Middle School one of my front two teeth stuck out so badly that I could hardly close my lips. My friends joked that I could eat watermelon through a picket fence.

And those were my friends.

Several years later, when I was in high school, my younger brothers used to love to go and get my middle school picture and show it to friends that came over – there I was – big ears – they had grown faster than the rest of my body, red hair, freckle faced and with this one tooth sticking way out. How they would all laugh.

I'm okay now . . . it took 10 years of counseling, but I'm fine.

So let me tell you . . . I was really glad for braces and my parents sacrificed dearly to pay for them.

But if you've had braces – especially back in those days when they were solid metal – you know how they hurt . . . oh they hurt for weeks at first. And then they required time and effort to clean.

It was worth it all.

That's the word used Paul uses here. And it's found only here in all the New Testament.^{vii}

Titus, I want you to straighten out those things that are crooked and out of place in the churches on the island of Crete.

There are things that need setting in order.

In fact, you'll notice Paul writes that these *still remain* out of order.

In other words, Paul wasn't able to finish the job organizing the church and setting into place proper leadership structures and the relationships between the offices of the church and the congregation.

There were broken things to mend and crooked things to straighten out.

And by the way, it would be painful . . . it would require extra attention . . . it would be emotionally costly . . . and the problems wouldn't be fixed overnight.

But it would be worth it.

But can you imagine *Titus* having this as his introduction.

He's going to arrive at an established church and they're going to say to him, “Just what do you intend to do?”

I intend to straighten you out – and it's going to hurt.

And just how to suppose you're going to do that?

Well, first and foremost, I'm going to appoint men who will serve as elders in every church on the island.

Who said you had the right to do that?

Well, here's a letter to me and through me to you from the Apostle himself – look here at *verse 5, I left you in Crete that you would set in order what*

remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you.

There you have it. Whether you like it or not, Titus was instructed to find, select, train and set apart such men to serve.^{viii}

And the word Paul uses here in reference to these men who will serve in each church, is this word, elder.

The term was adapted from the life of the synagogue. The elder was the common term for leadership and since the early church was primarily Jewish, this term was perfectly suitable.

Back in the ***Book of Acts and chapter 14, Luke writes that they appointed elders for them in every church.***

- These men would determine church policy (Acts 15);
- they would oversee the church affairs (Acts 20);
- they would rule, teach and preach (1 Timothy 5);
- they would exhort and refute false teaching (Titus 1:9);
- they would act as shepherds, setting an example for all the flock (1 Peter 5).^{ix}

Now there are three terms that actually appear in the New Testament for this one office.

The term presbuteros is one word, translated elder. From the earliest beginnings of the church, it was clear that a group of spiritual elders were identified to have responsibility and development and direction of the church.

The passages that use the term presbuteros seem to focus on the character of the man more than anything else.

Another New Testament term for this office is episkopos, usually translated “bishop.” Episkopos was to the Greek, what presbuteros was to the Hebrew.

Bishops would have been immediately understood by Gentile converts as someone who was given responsibility by the Emperor to lead newly captured city-states. The Bishop was responsible, not to the people, but to the emperor who had delegated to him the right to lead.^x

In ***1 Peter 2:25, Jesus Christ is called the episkopos of our souls*** –that is, He is the One with the right to rule over our newly conquered lives – He is the guardian of our souls.

So presbuteros and episkopos were two terms that emerged in early New Testament church life for the men who guarded and guided the church, under the delegated authority – and accountable to the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

You can easily see, by the way, how the Presbyterian and Episcopalian denominations created their names from the transliteration of these two Greek terms.

- Episkopos = Episcopalian
- Presbuteros = Presbyterian

Which is why Baptist have probably been so reluctant to use perfectly biblical titles for this office.

Frankly, it’s a lot more important to be biblical than Presbyterian or Episcopalian or Baptist.

Above all we ought to be committed to the words of scripture rather than and above anything else.

Those who lead the church will one day give an account for the souls entrusted to their charge – they will not be asked the question, Were you a good Baptist or Presbyterian or Episcopalian leader and did fulfill the traditional expectations of your role?

No, they will be asked, were you faithful to your role as revealed in Holy Scripture.

Did you do in the 21st century what I, the Spirit of God, commanded the shepherds to do in the 1st century?

The culture changed but the role didn’t. The objectives never shifted. The goal never moved. Did you wear the mantle of a shepherd well?

There’s one more term that clearly defines the role of the elder/bishop.

It appears less often and is translated pastor or shepherd. It’s the term poimen (ποιμην).

It’s also used of Christ by Peter who calls Jesus the ***Shepherd of our souls (1 Peter 2:25).***

The Apostle Peter uses the term again when he refers to ***Jesus Christ as our Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4).***

All the other shepherds are under shepherds to Him. We are accountable, not to the flock, but to Him. We don’t speak for the flock, we speak for Christ to the flock.

Little wonder that such care would be given then to a group of men burdened and blessed with so great a task as that.

The term poimen speaks to the feeding of the flock, more than anything else.

In fact, when Paul wrote to the Ephesians of the gifted men given by Christ to the church, when he mentioned the church leader, of these three terms he could have used, he chose to categorically refer to this office with the title, pastor/shepherd; literally feeder (*Ephesians 4:11*).

Feed the flock of God which is among you (1 Peter 5:1-2).

Peter, do you love me? Shepherd my sheep . . . feed my sheep. (John 21)

Lead them into green pastures, well fed and well taken care of.

That's why it isn't optional that elders deliver the word to the flock and expound on it and teach it and apply it and exhort obedience to it . . . everything else is barren ground.

The scriptures are the fertile fields of green pastures for the souls of the flock.

I remember a woman meeting with a pastor in town. She had moved into town and was concerned about the church she would attend. She had her list of questions to ask the head pastor – did he hold to the scriptures; did he teach the scriptures verse by verse; after a couple of minutes he interrupted her and said, “I know what kind of church you're looking for – and let me just tell you we're not into that . . . but I recommend you visit Colonial – I hear that's what they do over there.”

And that isn't a compliment to me – it is a commendation of this entire body of elders who's passion is to deliver the word of God to our culture in this generation.

I can only begin to tell you how incredibly blessed I have been over the past 25 years to serve with men who, with only a few exceptions – which is a testimony in and of itself to the goodness of God – this team has stayed the course and remained committed to holy living and sound doctrine and a biblical philosophy of ministry and with humility and graciousness have served the flock.

We have been blessed by God!

And so is every church that has men faithfully adhering to the character and authority and passion of the biblical leadership.

Men who run counter culture in their thinking and living.

And frankly, the growing influence of this pulpit is a testimony to the fact that for 25 years, I have never once had any deacon or elder ever come up to me and say, “We really wish you'd do something

other than teach passages of scripture; we really wish you wouldn't take the Bible so seriously; why do you spend so much time going through Books of the Bible?”

On that last one, they might have been tempted . . . but not once have I ever heard any of our elders say anything other than, “Keep at it.”

I shared with our guests at the Wisdom banquet this past week – around 650 of them – almost all of them part of this church – how God is now beginning to use the ministry of the word from this pulpit to spread. Now in five languages, at the end of this year, Lord willing it may be in seven.

It's almost as if He's been waiting to see if we as a church and leadership team would compromise – or qualify – or negotiate – or fudge on the truth of His word.

It's almost as if He's said, “Alright . . . now, we'll let the word run to and fro from this place.”

I shared with them this week what I knew you might be equally excited to hear – in the last 4 months, since revamping our website so that now every sermon and every transcript of everything we've ever preached is now downloadable and printable for free – in other words, we're giving it all away for free to anyone who has the ability to podcast it or print it.

In these first 4 months, we've had sermons downloaded 264,000 times.

And it wasn't just my mother . . . she listens, but she doesn't have an Ipod.

We don't know who they are, but we know they logged in from the following countries:

The USA, of course
Canada
India
Romania
England
Wales
Scotland
Puerto Rico
Nigeria
Belgium
Bolivia
Jamaica
New Zealand
Norway
Honduras
Japan
Mexico

Paraguay
Brazil
Colombia
Indonesia
Costa Rica
Malaysia
Philippines
Germany
Guam
Spain
France
Sri Lanka
South Africa
Zambia
Australia
Ireland
Barbados
Ghana
Kenya
South Korea
Sudan
Ukraine
Uganda
Egypt
Guatemala
Croatia
Netherlands
Panama
Peru
Portugal
Qatar
Slovakia
Venezuela
Argentina
Aruba
Bulgaria
Switzerland
Chile
Denmark
Ecuador
Italy
Kuwait
Latvia
Tanzania
Uruguay
Russia
Singapore
and Taiwan

Amen? You know what that tells us – people are hungry. And I can't tell you how surprised I am . . .

all we're doing is what everybody oughtta be doing. But maybe the fact that it's beginning to pick up so much speed is simply to our shame – everybody isn't doing it.

Our country especially may very well be deserving of the condemnation God delivered to the shepherds of Israel when He said they were feeding themselves but not feeding the flock.

This is our commission as elders – preach and teach the word and lead the flock into the green pastures of God's word.

And so to summarize these three terms:

- The term, elder, refers to the character of the office;
- The term, bishop, refers to the authority of the office;
- The term, pastor, refers to the passion of the office.

And from these three terms, along with all the passages where these leaders appear, what emerges then is the role of the leader.

Just by way of a quick overview – let me give you four principle characteristics of this role:

First, the elders are plural in their leadership

There's a lot of healthy debate on this particular subject and I won't bring the debate into the pulpit.

But I will say that in our effort to follow the New Testament, it is interesting that there is not one explicit reference to a one-pastor; single-elder church.

In fact, every place where the term elder is used, it is plural, except when John and Peter used the word to refer to themselves.

Now, this doesn't mean there weren't congregations ruled by one pastor or elder, but none are mentioned.

Proponents of a one-elder rule say that there were elders in a city church that was composed of individual house churches where a singular elder had oversight; but then all the house churches in the city got together periodically and from that you had a plurality of elders. But the fact remains, the church was seen as one church in that city, and decisions were made by a collective process of elders in reference to the whole church, not the individual parts. So you still end up with a plurality of leaders making decisions.^{xi}

Still others refer to the letters sent by Christ to individual churches in Revelation 2 and 3. They

argue that since the letters to the churches were delivered to a singular angel – angelos – of the church, that this angel – or messenger – was a reference to a singular elder or singular pastor-teacher.

The problem with that view is that we're guessing. In fact, if the angel was indeed a pastor, in Revelation 2 and 3, it would just as easily reinforce the concept of a leader among leaders – a first among equals – since we're not told that this elder didn't represent a group of elders.^{xii}

In fact, we know that one of the churches that received a letter did indeed have more than one elder – the church at Ephesus.

The principle of a leader among leaders is illustrated in the church at Jerusalem with the prominence of James, the pastor teacher who was the leader among the other leaders – directing the church toward a final decision regarding Gentile converts.

We're also told more specifically that some elders are deserving of greater honor. Paul wrote to Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:17-18 that those elders who worked hard at preaching and teaching were worthy of double honor – a word for remuneration.

Which by the way also informs us that all the elders in a church body didn't necessarily preach or teach and it implied that ruling authority was given to some elders who had more authority than other elders.

What's important to understand is that there is not one passage that explicitly says one elder has *all* the authority in a church – in fact, that would be a characteristic of a cult, not a church.^{xiii}

When taken at face value – the scriptures indicate that elders (plural) were appointed in every church (singular) and the sharing of responsibilities and authority was the sign of a healthy and vibrant church.

We had a woman visit our church for several weeks before deciding to leave . . . she wrote me an email telling me she had visited and was leaving and why. She wrote a number of things I won't repeat, but one of the things she wrote was, "The problem I have with your church is that there are too many men in leadership."

I wanted to thank her for that but I knew she wouldn't understand.

Secondly, the elders are providers in their oversight

I've already touched on the subject of teaching and feeding, but let me reinforce it here.

There are elders in many churches who love the idea of ruling and leading and authority and power and prominence.

But shepherding and feeding is somewhere lower on the list.

I love the story about the new pastor who wasn't doing a very good job in the pulpit. He was often confusing, fumbling for words and thoughts – it was obvious to the flock that he wasn't studying. So the other elders finally asked him in a meeting, "When exactly do you prepare your messages?" He responded, "As you know, I live a block away . . . and I prepare my sermon as I walk to the church on Sunday morning." So they moved him a mile away.

Walter Kaiser pointed out the anemic state of affairs in the American church and he placed the responsibility squarely on the shoulders of elders and pastors who were doing everything but preaching the word of God.

He writes, "It is no secret that Christ's Church is not at all in good health. She has been languishing because she has been fed, as the current line has it, "junk food"; all kinds of artificial preservatives and all sorts of unnatural substitutes have been served up to her. As a result, theological and Biblical malnutrition has afflicted the very generation that has taken such giant steps to make sure its physical health is never damaged by using food that is harmful to their bodies. At the same time, a spiritual famine has resulted from the absence of any genuine [preaching] of the Word of God.

I would add to that my own observation that church leaders in America have become experts at dissecting life . . . the human experience . . . and not the word of life.

In our generation the average church leader today can quote Peter Drucker but not the Apostle Peter. They can give you insights from John Maxwell, but not the Apostle John.

There's nothing wrong with principles from Maxwell or Drucker, but the pastor teacher can only give to the congregation what he himself has learned.

And the Bible is somewhere further down on his reading list.

My father and I were talking on one occasion about how pastors are influenced by the material they are reading through the week – the things they allow their minds to dwell upon – the authors they allow to influence them . . . and how much this can affect their preaching and philosophy of ministry and even style of leadership.

He said to me something I never forgot simply because it was so simple and yet so profound. He said, “You know when I was growing up on the farm, we could always tell when our cow Bessie had gotten into the onions . . . we could taste it in the milk.

We feed others what we have been grazing on ourselves.

Let’s go back to the scriptures – undiluted, unmixed, un-soured truth.

That’s the role of the elder – to see that the flock is fed the milk and meat of the word, cared for and directed and guided biblically.

And the greatest joy of any elder, like John the Apostle, who said he had no greater joy than to know that his spiritual *children were walking in the truth (3 John 4)*.

That’s it . . . that is our greatest joy.

The elders are plural in their leadership; they are providers in their oversight;

Thirdly, the elders are protective in their guardianship

We’ll actually get into this point later on in chapter 1 as Titus informs the elders that their role is to refute those who contradict the truth of scripture.

Our job is to warn and protect the flock.

Just as fathers in individual homes warn their sons of many things, right? Just as Dads warn their daughters of young men, right?

I can appreciate the answer that Charles Barkley, the basketball hall-of-famer gave to a reporter who once asked him how he was going to handle his young daughter’s future boyfriends. He said, “Well, I figure if I kill the first guy, word will spread.”

I never stopped warning you – Paul said in *Acts 20 to the Ephesian elders – be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure savage*

wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock . . . therefore be on the alert.

The wolves are coming.

Philip Keller in his wonderful book taken from his many years raising and tending sheep, wrote, This [warning] reminds me of the behavior of a band of sheep under attack from dogs, cougars, bears and wolves. Often in blind fear they will stand rooted to the spot watching their companions being cut to shreds. The predator will pounce upon one then another of the flock raking and tearing them with tooth and claw. Meanwhile, the other sheep may even act as if they do not hear or recognize the carnage going on around them. It is as though they are totally oblivious to the peril of their own position.^{xiv}

Charles Jefferson who pastored in the late 1800’s wrote, “The journey from the cradle to the grave is hazardous . . . if every man is surrounded by perils; if the universe is alive with forces hostile to the soul, then watchfulness becomes one of the most critical of all the pastor’s responsibilities.” Elders are to be protectors, watchmen, defenders, and guardians of God’s people.^{xv}

Perhaps that’s why one national Christian leader answered a reporter this way when he was asked, “What is the most important quality for a leader to possess?” His answer was, in a word, “Courage.”

That may be true, especially in these days.

- to discipline sin in the church;
- to confront internal strife and division in the church;
- to name sin in the face of cultural approval;
- to stand against doctrinal error;
- to refute false teaching and false teachers;
- to literally lay down your life for the sake of the flock demands among other qualities, courage.

The elders are plural in their leadership; they are providers in their oversight; they are protective in their guardianship – one more;

Fourthly, the elders have priority in their leadership.

In other words, they rule the flock and they are to be obeyed.

The church, ladies and gentlemen, as counter-culture as this may sound, especially to American ears – is not a democracy. It isn't even a republic.

Elders are not elected officials so that they might represent their various constituencies in the church body.

The elders are not representatives of the people to bring the opinions of the people into the boardroom. In fact, they are not accountable to the people – they are accountable to God as they lead the people.

The Apostle Peter charged the elders with these words, ***“Shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God. (1 Peter 5:2)***

Elders do not speak for the people – they speak to the people on behalf of Christ, the Chief Shepherd.

Peter goes on to warn every elder and at the same time encourage them, ***“And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you - elders – will receive a unique unfading crown of glory”.*** (1 Peter 5:4)

In other words, the elders will one day give an account to Him and He will reward them accordingly.

So the writer of Hebrews weighs in and writes to the same issue with some rather politically incorrect words to the Flock, ***“Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief.”*** (Hebrews 13:17)

Can I tell you something beloved . . . after 25 years of ministry here at this church – you have brought me great joy.

Great joy!

And I speak for our elder team and our deacons – together some 80 men – men filled with wisdom and the Spirit who love you and pray for you and are giving their lives for your benefit and growth and protection . . . you have brought us great joy.

Let's stay the course . . . let's covenant together today, anew – that we may all, together, bring our Chief Shepherd – our Lord – great joy; not grief, may we bring Him but great joy.

I love you Lord, and I lift my voice
To worship you, oh my soul rejoice
Take joy my King, in what you hear,
May it be a sweet, sweet sound in Your ear.

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 2/12/2012 by Stephen Davey.

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i Adapted from John MacArthur sermon manuscript: www.gty.org/resources/sermons/80-380

ii Grant Osborne, General Editor; *Life Application Bible, 1 & 2 Timothy/Titus* (Tyndale House Publishers, 1993), p. 246

iii D Edmond Hiebert, *Titus and Philemon* (Moody Bible Institute, 1957), p. 28

iv Quoted from: www.us.dockers.com/season/landing.aspx

v Charles R. Swindoll, *New Testament Insights on 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus* (Zondervan, 2010), p. 271

vi Hiebert, p. 30

vii John Kitchen, *The Pastoral Epistles for Pastors* (Kress Christian Publications, 2009), p. 487

viii Kitchen, p. 488

ix MacArthur, p. 13

x Ibid, p. 9

xi MacArthur, p. 27

xii Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership* (Lewis and Roth Publishers, 1995), p. 47

xiii MacArthur, p. 27

xiv Strauch, p. 18

xv Ibid