

The God-Qualified Pastor, p.3

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Take your Bibles and let's go to 1 Timothy 3 as we go back to our preaching through this New Testament book. This is a book written by the Apostle Paul to his associate Timothy. He has left Timothy at the local church in Ephesus and he's writing this letter to fully, or rather further disciple him in how the church is to be structured and how she's to function. We call it beautifying the bride. The local church is the bride of Christ. Now one day all the churches will be gathered into one glorious universal church but that's when the Lord returns. Right now the church is a local church, a local visible body of baptized believers and that's what we are as Grace Life Church of the Shoals. So we can take this holy authoritative, inerrant word of God and particularly this writing to Timothy and find out for ourselves how we are to fashion and to function so that we might as a church show forth Christ, we might be an extension of him, a, a statement of him, his bride, that is, to the world, and that's exactly what the song says that we just sang, "May we be what we ought to be as local churches, that his face might be clearly seen." As you do what you're supposed to do in small groups, as you do what you're supposed to do in dying to yourself and being humble and, and, and promoting the unity and the cooperation of the church, as you do your role in sharing the Gospel and ministering to one another, etc. etc., then we become a beautiful picture of Christ's wisdom and power and beauty to the world. That's the way he set it up.

So this book is so very important to what we are all about. Now we come to chapter 3 and, ah, this actually part 3 of the series of messages in that an elder, ah, is a qualified, a God-qualified I should say pastor. He's a God-qualified pastor. Now I, into that was he must be blameless in his moral character and we saw all of those things spelled out. Let's just read it together in verse 1 and 2 of 1 Timothy 3.

1 It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer [you could say pastor or elder, interchangeable words], it is a fine work he desires to do. 2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach [and here are these moral characteristics], the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money.

Now we've already looked at all of that but now we come to II, and we point out that an elder must be blameless also in his family life. Blameless in his family life. Now that,

that word "blameless" or as some, ah, versions translate it, "be above reproach," literally means nothing sticks. Now it doesn't mean he's perfect. You take a good enough microscope, matter of fact, you will not even need a real good microscope, and you can put your church elders under there and you'll find things but the point is there's no glaring outward rut or pattern of a failure in these areas that would disqualify him from being established in that office. So Paul writes to Timothy and he says, "As you're establishing elders in the local church, remember he must be blameless in his family life."

Look at verse, rather verse 4.

4 He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity [and then verse 5] 5 (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?),

So home life or the home life is an essential consideration when looking for a man to fill the office of elder. In other words, his spiritual leadership must be proven at home before he is considered a prospect for being a leader in the church.

Now this would imply generally, not absolutely but generally he needs to be an older man. Now I don't mean old necessarily but old enough to have children and to have observed his conduct in leading his home and leading his children. Ah, the idea is he's to have a well-ordered and properly trained household, or as verse 5 says, if he can't do that, how is he gonna well-order and properly train the church if he's put in the office of pastor or overseer?

Now this is another reminder that the Roman Catholic doctrine of the celibacy of church leadership is not biblically sound. I'm not saying it's absolutely error but, ah, the Bible says his conduct in his home life, in his marriage, is a, is an example or a preliminary for how well he'll do leading the church. Well, if you forbid marriage, then how is he gonna prove that? Ah, matter of fact, look at 1 Timothy 4. Go over a chapter and look at verse 1. 1 Timothy 4:1, Paul writes to Timothy and says, "the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons." There'll be a, a, a, an ever-increasing tendency for the wicked one to bring false unsound doctrine or teaching into the church. What kind of teaching would this be? Verse 3, "men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth." He says one of the things that's common among these false teachers is they'll tell you that you can't be right with God if you're married or at least they'll say you can't be really spiritual unless you're celibate and have no marriage partner. That's totally unscriptural.

Here Paul tells Timothy, "Look, look for a man who's done a good job in his household." Not perfect. I remember studying John MacArthur's commentary on this and he talks about, um, the time he was in a furniture store with his wife and children and they were trying to pick out some furniture and there were obviously some disagreements about the furniture, and he walked out and said, "Oh me, I hope I haven't hurt our witness for Christ

today." Well, that's true of all of us, is it not? But as a pattern of life, I think Dr. MacArthur is fully qualified to be an elder in the church.

So the nature of the leadership is, verse 4, that he manages his home. That's the word in the New American Standard, "who manages his own household well." You could translate the word "manage, rule," and it is translated in other places "rule." It means "to preside," it means "to have authority over or to stand before." Ah, and once again we remind ourselves that even in the Southern Baptist Convention, how quickly Southern Baptists are getting slick and slippery and slimy on some things, and one of those things is male headship. Ah, we've got, ah, a woman or two that's kinda spouting that they ought to be in the pulpit and they ought to be preaching. Well, once again, his, the man's leadership in the home parallels male leadership in the church. This is affirmed over and over in the Scriptures. So he's to manage well or rule well. The elders ability to rule the church is affirmed by his ability to manage and rule in the home.

So that's the nature, he's to manage or to rule over first in his home, then if he's appointed also to the church. Now the quality of his leadership. The word here is "well," he is to manage well. The word "well" here is kalos and kalos is not the word agathos, the word agathos just literally means inherently good or morally good. Well, it includes that but kalos means aesthetically good. It's a beautiful thing. You can look at the man's family, far from perfect but it has a beauty to it, the way the children behave, the way the wife honors her husband, the way the children are taught to be respectful and courteous and, and upright in their conduct. So he is a, a, has an inherently, inherent goodness but it has a beauty to it as you observe it.

And then the area specifically that's mentioned in verse 4, not only manages and rules, not only is it, does he do it well, it has a, a, a moral beauty and an aesthetic beauty, but also he keeps his children under control with all dignity. This is a military phrase, under control. It means submission. They line up under. It means they live under his authority. His children are to be lined up under him, respectfully controlled and disciplined. We do not adhere to the modern, liberal, progressive concepts that children ought to be let to do basically what they want to do lest we warp them in some way. No, sometimes you need to whoop them in some ways and you're not gonna warp them if you do it. That's biblical. The Bible says if you spare the rod, you spoil the child. Now obviously we don't believe in doing this in anger and in a mean spirit, and, and somehow, a, a, a, being a, a brutal in spirit toward our children, but there is a proper place for firm discipline in the home.

Now Titus, when Paul writes to Titus, Titus is in a Crete and Titus is trying to straighten up some very troubled, disorganized churches on the isle of Crete and Titus adds that a preacher's children must be believers. Now that's a hard thing to put your, ah, minds around exactly what does that mean? Does that mean if there's one child in a pastor's home who's not a believer, then he's disqualified? I don't think so. I don't think it means believer in the sense of actual regeneration because only the Spirit of God can do that. I think it generally means that his children know he's preaching the truth. His children believe that he believes what's right. They have respect for his message and they honor

and respect that. Now it says he must keep them under control, the phrase is "with all dignity." The idea is that they are upright and they are proper and they are orderly.

So crucial leadership is exemplified in the home environment. Think about it there, resolving conflict has to be practiced often in the home environment. Building a unity. Keeping your kids on your team and, um, ah, maintaining love and the good and the bad, and when you're happy and when you're sad. A, a servant spirit. All of these things are manifested in the home and are a proof if a man is qualified for the office of pastor or elder in the church.

Now, III, not only does Paul point to Timothy, ah, an elder must be a man who is blameless in his moral character, he must be blameless in his family life, but thirdly, he must be blameless in his spiritual maturity. Blameless in his spiritual maturity. Verse 6,

6 and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.

Now the phrase "new convert" literally in the Greek means "newly planted." In other words, he must be mature spiritually speaking. Now one thing we need to remind ourselves is maturity is relative place to place. I'll give you an example. Ah, probably none of our elders, including myself, who were voted into the office of elder in this church what, what, 25+ years ago I guess now, none of us if we were in the state we were spiritually then if we were moved us up in time to today, none of us would qualify to be an elder in this church because the maturity of the body has, has grown. We knew nothing of church discipline when we all became elders, we were just trying to learn. We knew of almost nothing of genuine conversion and the genuine preaching of the Gospel and the evidences of new birth. We were still caught in the hoop jump, go through the motions thing. You know where 90 something percent of the people you baptize fall out of church faithfulness over the next year or two. We knew nothing about personalized strategic world missions that is so essential to all that we are about today at Grace Life Church. We knew almost nothing about biblical conflict resolution and holding one another accountable in those areas to, to maintain the unity of the church. And on and on we could go. Ah, we knew almost nothing about resolving a lot of marital conflicts and it, it happens and it's quite rare when we have to dismiss someone from the church because they abandoned their marriage. But here's what you don't know, you don't see the dozens and dozens of marriages whereby we come alongside and intervene and they decide to stay together. Can I get an amen there? We don't know anything about that. We were trying, we were learning, we weren't against it but nobody else was doing it either. But today when a man comes on as elder, he needs to have a lot of that already under his belt. He needs to have been walking in a lot of that or he will be a novice, which is another word for this, ah, phrase "not a new convert." He wouldn't be able to function. So these things are relative in, in some of the churches we work with in the church plants as we, ah, help a young man be a pastor there. He could not perhaps be a pastor here because we're at a different place, but in that setting he's one of the more mature ones. Ah, for example in, in, in the city of Corinth as, um, Paul began to establish elders there, I

can assure you those elders would not have qualified probably in Ephesus because the Corinthian church was so immature and so shallow and so troubled on so many levels.

So note the wisdom of God's word. It doesn't give you such a narrow legalism, it gives you basic principles so there's good application in all settings. But not a new convert. That is, he must be blameless in his spiritual character. Now what he says here in verse 6 is if you put a new convert in there, he can become conceited, literally the phrase means he can be puffed up, puffed up in pride. Ah, you know, Paul wrote to the Corinthians and says, "Knowledge puffeth up," and that's one of the great errors of theological and pastoral training today is we sit men down in classrooms and they study and read and do those endless research papers. Oh gosh, I didn't think I'd ever get through with those things. And research and read and research and read and research and read and take those tests, and we train these men in a classroom and they get tons of knowledge but they've done nothing as far as pastoring in many cases, the actual work, and that's what we want to address in our pastoral training institute. We want to teach the proper theology, sound doctrine, something of Greek and Hebrew, church history, systematic theology, Old and New Testament theology, we're gonna teach something of those things but we want them to grasp how does it work in the church, and that is the endless statement from men all over the world who are pastoring is this statement, "I never learned that in graduate school. I never was taught this in graduate school."

Well, my point is that, that if a man's gonna be elder, he needs to be trained and equipped, he needs to be matured in a lot of these things before he's placed in that position. If not, he can become conceited or he can become puffed up. It literally has the idea of being wrapped up in smoke. Now it means more than just puffed up in pride, one scholar points out that it means that he begins to function on things that have no substance. Smoke has no real substance. He begins to function in emotion and in pragmatism and doing things that a more mature man of God would not do. So he says be careful. Matter of fact, one scholar pointed out and this is a quite dignified man, it's kinda interesting that he would use this word, he says he's prone to do things that are stupid. That's not my word, that's his word but I think it's a good word. And can I just say to you, just getting down to brass tacks where the rubber meets the road and what's going on in churches today, I can take you to churches in the Shoals area and I can take you to churches all over this country that claim to be Bible-believing, evangelical, even baptistic churches and what they do in their church service is nothing less than stupid. It's just dumb stuff. It looks like an immature child put the service together. That's exactly I think what Paul's talking about. If a man's not seasoned, if he doesn't have some maturity, if he's not grown enough to know what matters, he's prone to get into puffed up, dusty, smoky stuff, emotion driven sometimes stupid stuff to "make the church better or to help the church out." Can I say something to you? Jesus' church needs no help. He will build his church. He wants us to get in on it with him. Boy, that's the challenge of the hour and that's what our Baptist forefathers died over. But a man if he's too young and a novice, he can get wrapped up in a false sense of spirituality. His thinking becomes clouded. He has proud thoughts and foolish and immature thoughts about church life, doctrine and application into church life.

So we remind ourselves that a man could be a good teacher and, boy, have we seen, I've seen so many young men who are absolutely firecrackers in the pulpit, they were so gifted and everybody just swooned and wowed over them, but my question would be: are they mature? You might be a great teacher or preacher but are you mature? A man could be a great teacher or preacher, he could be a great leader, he could have leadership skills, I had good leadership skills before I was even saved, much less spiritual. That's not necessarily what we're looking for. He may even be morally blameless. He may be blameless in his whole life, home life rather, but still not qualify simply because relatively he is a new Christian and the tendency for him is to get swelled up in pride and function with foolish things in his ministry or on foolish things in his ministry. And I'm telling you, we, we, we are in this age in today's evangelicalism, we are suffering from youth idolatry. We're making an idol out of the foolishness that's in young people's hearts and we design churches and church services to appeal to foolish youthful thinking and feelings. "Well, I like that and that's cool and that drives me, and that makes me want to come back." Well, is it right? Is it biblical? And again, the church service looks like a bunch of kids put it together instead of a mature man of God. That, I think, is exactly what Paul is talking about here.

So again, there is a relative nature here. In some settings one man may be okay as an elder because the church is just getting going, they're just starting and just learning things. Another church may have been at it for decades and, and now that same man may not qualify as elder in that situation.

Now he has a startling statement here, the last part of verse 6 about not, about he being blameless in his spiritual maturity, i.e. not being a new convert, last phrase, "and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil." The condemnation that the devil incurred upon himself was this shameful fall, it was a demotion because of his fall. But think about Satan, he had such a high and honored and esteemed privilege as this prized and, ah, glorious angel in the presence of God, and yet in his pride he didn't, wasn't satisfied with that, he thought, "I'll decide what's right for me and I'll decide what's best for me. Why should I yield to God?" And in his pride he fell and experienced a condemnation.

So to avoid exposing a man to that kind of condemnation and shame, we must not place him in spiritual leadership too quickly, and it's not out of the interpretive context here to, to, ah, conclude that there is a unique condemnation for men who hold the high office of pastor and misuse it in their pride for their own glory, their own gain, or their own popularity. So Paul says, "Be careful, Timothy. Young men are prone." I would say all young men struggle and wrestle and have to repent through that but he should be growing out of it and not resting in it.

IV. He must be blameless in his reputation outside of the church. Verse 7,

7 And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

A good reputation, an inherent goodness. The word "reputation" in the New American Standard here is the word *martureo*. *Martureo* is the word we get martyr from. It literally means "a certifying testimony," that if you talk to the community about him, they may not say he's perfect but they find no pattern of glaring moral or, or, or, or lack of character in his life that could be held against him. Ah, he, he pays his bills. He's not a scoundrel. He keeps his word. He's honest in his dealings generally speaking in the public's eye. And, and, and Paul says if you're not careful, you'll get a man that's learned how to turn it on in the church, he's leaning heavily on his natural gifts and abilities to wow the church but he's a man of low or weak character and most of the folks in the community know it.

He says he'll fall into the reproach, or how does he word it there in verse 7? "So that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." First, the reproach of the devil. That just means the disgrace and we see a couple of places where this idea is mentioned in the text. For example in Romans 2:24, "For 'the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,' just as it is written." Paul's writing in context of the Jewish hypocrites of his day. And he says, "You guys have gone around flaunting your religion outwardly, bringing all of these rules and legalistic laws to bear on everybody you see but you yourselves are flagrantly, wantonly violating those same things you teach. It's not that you struggled here and there, you're just walking in the law-breaking you're telling everybody else they ought to keep and you're causing those who don't even know God to blaspheme the name of God."

And then 1 Corinthians 5:1 where Paul writes to the church at Corinth, he says, "It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife." Now the world is going to attack God's preacher, the world is going to undermine God's preacher, the world is gonna slander, put a spin and a twist on everything God's preacher says, but as you investigate and talk, they can't come up with concrete evidence. They can't say, "He didn't pay this bill. He didn't keep his word. Here's the proof." He has a blameless reputation outside of the church.

Now quickly let me close with a couple of quick thoughts here. I want to go to 1 Corinthians, um, chapter 4. It'll be on your screen, but let me remind you of who this is written to. This is written to an associate apostle, if you will, Timothy, and Timothy was responsible for appointing elders in the church. As, ah, Acts 14:21-23 reminds us, actually I'll just go to verse 23, and "When they," that's Paul and his leadership, "had appointed elders for them in every church." So in the early churches, it was established church leaders who appointed the elders or the pastors for every church. Now as time goes on, today the task is left to the standing elders in each church to appoint new elders to that church. Matter of fact, Dr. John MacArthur, who's a mentor to a lot of us, they have no congregational vote, no congregational nomination. Their present elder body just appoints new elders or pastors to the church. Now we're more baptistic than that, we believe there ought to be more of a congregational role, more of a democratic process so we've always brought it to the church and asked you to give your nominations and the best I remember, we have always placed into the office of elder the folks you gave the

highest nominations to or votes to, and I think that's because you discern like we discern who those men are that God's raising up, not necessarily more godly men, not necessarily they are more blameless than other men, it's just that they have those quality, those character qualities and they seem to have the gifts and the calling for that role.

So we do a, a, a, a, a complementary approach, if you will, that the church has a strong voice. We would never place someone that you didn't highly nominate and recommend as a body, and then the elders step in and interview because we would always hold the final decision on that. Sometimes there's a person who has something in their life that no one knows about and no one needs to know about perhaps, but we've had many a man through these, ah, 30 years or so come and say, "I know I've received these nominations but, pastor, I, I, I just don't think I need to be in that office." We don't ask questions. It's none of our business. We just say, "Well, praise the Lord. That's your discernment." Then nobody needs to know those, that information. And so the elders have the final clearing on who is finally presented to the church and then the church must vote to place them in office, but the point is that these are God's men placed in the office of elder or pastor by God's leading as we follow the teachings of Scripture and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Now I want to go to 1 Corinthians 4 and give you a final reminder to the church. This is V., a final reminder for the church, and in 1 Corinthians 4, Paul talks about his own role as a minister and his own a, a, a, position and here's the way he says it. 1 Corinthians 4:1, "Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." Let's just stop there. As servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. So two things I want to bring to your mind, church. 1. Remember your pastor's rank. What rank, position, has God given your pastor? Well, Paul says here he's a servant. Literally the word is "slave." Now it's interesting that Paul says this to the church at Corinth. Do you know why? Because preacher worship was going on in Corinth. Remember one says, "Well, I am of Paul." Another would say, "Well, I am of Apollos." Then there was a real spiritual that would say, "Well, we're all of Christ." So preacher worship. They were, they were an immature church and they began to instead of just appreciating maybe the gifts or the abilities of the pastors, they actually began to make idols out of these pastors. Well, Paul said, "Well, you know what I am? I'm a servant." Literally the word is a slave.

Remember, church, your pastor is Christ's slave. Not your slave. He's Christ's slave. You didn't call me to this office. You didn't call Brother Matt or any of the elders to their office. God did that. We have no right to use worldly criteria to see if someone else's slave qualifies. We don't look at popularity or personality or degrees from the graduate school or numbers accumulated in their ministries. The word "servant" here or "slave" literally means "an under-rower." It referred to the lowest galley slaves in the bottom of the ship. It was the word used in the New Testament for those under the authority of another. We have to remind ourselves that the preacher is an owned man, not a hired man. He's not contracted out. He's not a business partner. He's not your employee. He is a slave, he is a galley slave of another. That's his rank. He has no rights of his own.

But not only a slave, I'd like to amplify this from the text and tell you he's an exclusive slave. He's the servant or the slave of Christ exclusively. Exclusively. Some churches give their pastor a job description written by some committee and it might be okay if it's thoroughly biblical. Typically they're not. Ah, one of our men who joined our church some years ago came from another church and he showed me the job description that the members of the church put together for their next pastor. It had all these things and most of them had nothing to do with Scripture, and he even tongue-in-cheek said, "I had to write one in at the bottom." I said, "What did you have to write in?" He said, "Evangelistic." They didn't have winning the lost as a part of his job. That's how unbiblical. Listen, that's blasphemy. What right do you have to give another man's slave a job description? You don't own him. Keep your hands off God's slave. He's given his man a job description and I thank God that this has been the only one you've ever given me, "Pastor, be biblical," and I have striven with my energies to do just that.

How can they exercise authority over another's slave? He's the exclusive slave, he answers to only one Master and he has a Master that requires exclusive allegiance. Jesus doesn't tolerate dualism as to who he answers to. As someone has said, if the pastor pleases his Master, it does not matter who he displeases, but if the pastor displeases his Master, it does not matter who he pleases. Other voices will call for his allegiance, some call sweetly, some call sharply, some call seductively, some are scornfully and with threats, but he must turn a deaf ear because he hearkens exclusively to one voice. As Dr. Spurgeon used to say in his pastorate, "I learned to have a blind eye and a deaf ear. If I listened to everybody's thoughts and desires and plans for my ministry," he said, "I, I would turn into morbid introspection and fall into the despair of depression." Matter of fact, Charles Spurgeon, the most esteemed Baptist preacher of all time, the most published preacher of any era, period, used to say, "I beneath the castle of despair is a dungeon and that's where I live sometimes." I think that's because Spurgeon had so many railing accusing voices against him and he was trying to discipline himself to not listen to those voices but listen to his Master.

The pastor must be loyal to only one. He cannot be begged, bought, bribed or bullied into following another. He is not for sale because there's nothing to be bought. He's crucified all of his earthly worth, worth at the feet of his Master. He is a dead man, Galatians 2:20, completely oblivious to the clamoring alluring calls of this world. Curse him or beat him, he will consider it an honor to suffer for his Master's sake. Kill him and he'll be swallowed up in victory, ushered into his Master's presence, glorified and a better servant than he was before. The preacher is a servant of Christ.

Now church, let me exhort you, remember his rank. He's a slave of Christ. Lastly, remember his responsibility. Paul says to the church at Corinth, "We're servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." Stewards of the mysteries of God. This word "steward" in this day most commonly referred to a house slave and this house slave had authority over all of his master's belongings, including the material properties and the other slaves whether it be the fields, the vineyards, the finances, the foods, the other servants. He had authority over all of it but listen, only on behalf of the master who owned it all. He was a steward of somebody else's property.

Now Paul here says, "We ministers are stewards of the mysteries of God." Now remember when you find that phrase "mysteries of God" in the, in the New Testament particularly, it refers to the things the Jews did not yet see but in the New Testament era God has now unveiled and made obvious, that is, Christ, the Gospel of Christ and the New Testament church. That's the mystery that God would save through his Son Jesus Christ those from all peoples, tongues, tribes and nations, and he would form local churches all over the world and those churches would grow and mature and reach others and plant more local churches until the day came when the Master would return and he'd gather all of his children together in one, final, glorified, universal church. That's the mysteries of God. He said, "We're stewards of what used to be hidden. The Jews didn't grasp all of this. They rejected Jesus. They didn't get it. But now it's been unveiled." Paul said it another way in Galatians 2:7, he said, "We have been entrusted with the gospel." The minister is to be all about the person of Christ, the work of Christ, converting others to Christ, and the conduct of the converted in the local churches. That's the mystery of God now unveiled that he is a responsible steward over.

Pastors dispense the provision of the Master. We are not originators of the truth, we're only dispensaries. We dispense it to others. In Luke 1:2 ministers are called servants of the word. In 1 Corinthians 9:16 the Bible says we are to be slaves to the word and we are to build our ministry on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets which means the finished canon of Scripture, i.e. the New Testament Scriptures.

So God says through Paul to Timothy, "There are God-called men for the office of pastor and then there are God-qualified men." And we've looked at all of those qualifications and then I ended with this exhortation from 1 Corinthians 4, remember his rank, he's Christ's slave and his responsibility is the Master's work, the Gospel, converting the lost, establishing churches to be true churches for the glory of God.

Now you've been told nothing new this morning, the things we all need to listen, renew in our hearts, renew in our hearts, because as we look at these truths, we see once again the great wisdom and the beauty of God in putting his church together the way only he could.