

***“Paul’s First Letter to Timothy — A Heavenly Service Requires
Heavenly Minded Leaders”***

Last Time: ‘Prisoners of Hope’, Part 7, “The Pauline Women”

Today: “A Heavenly Service Requires Heavenly Minded Leaders” (1 Tim. 3:1-16)

Last time we reached the final installment in our series on “Prisoners of Hope”. Our focus was on the women Paul refers to directly by name in his letters. There were 18 overall and 17 named directly in his letters. We used Romans chapter 16 as our outline since it mentions 10 women directly and divides these into 7 groups:

Review:

- ***They Were Patron Saints of Paul Indeed***
- ***They Were Co-Ministers with Paul***
- ***They Were Fellow Prisoners with Paul***
- ***They Were Servants, Workers for Christ***
- ***They Were Hostesses of the House Churches***
- ***They Were Faithful Family Members That Made a Difference***
- ***They Were Persons of Privilege But Saints Indeed***

With so many women associated with the apostle we would do well to classify them into groups. Paul himself does that in the descriptions that he gives:

- ***Patron Saints of Paul Indeed: Phoebe (Rom. 16:1-5)***

Rom. 16:1-5

1 I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:

2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:

4 Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

5 Likewise [greet] the church that is in their house.

- ***In these verses we have Paul’s ‘letter or recommendation’ of Phoebe to the church in Rome. She was a Patron (benefactor) of Paul’s and to whom the letter to the Romans was entrusted!!!! She apparently was a well to do business woman who often traveled***

throughout the Roman world, perhaps with men who guarded her. But none of them are ever mentioned. She seems to have financed Paul's journeys.

- *She was the only one, though, who was called a “servant of the church which is at Cenchrea”. Prisoners of Hope indeed!*
- **Co-Ministers with Paul: Priscilla & Aquila, Euodia, and Syntyche (Rom. 16:3-5; 1 Cor. 16:19; 2 Tim. 4:19 cf Acts 18:1-3, 18-19, 26; Phil. 4:2-3)**
 - *This husband and wife team was the one most often referred to by the apostle — a total of 6 times! She is often mentioned first before her husband. They were faithful co-ministers with Paul in his several journeys. They shared Paul's avocation as tent maker and they “wrestled together in the gospel”. They were therefore teachers and preachers of the gospel and, he writes, their names were in the book of life! Prisoners of Hope indeed, with the church meeting in their house.*
- **Fellow Prisoners with Paul: Junia (Rom. 16:7)**

- *Junia (and Andronicus): The word translated “fellow prisoner” here means “prisoner of war at the point of a spear”. Aristarchus was also included - Col. 4:10 - and Epaphras as well - Phile. 1:23. It was a small but distinguished group indeed!*

Rom. 16:7 Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

- *Interestingly, Junia is called here his fellow prisoner, and of special note “among the apostles.” A Prisoner of Hope indeed! Prisoners of Hope and a New Life Lived!*
- **Hostesses of the House Churches: Lydia, Priscilla & Aquila, & Julia (Acts 16:13-15, 40; Rom. 16:15)**
 - *House churches met in their homes and in the house of Priscilla & Aquila, as we have seen. Also, the Acts accounts indicates that when Paul's journey brought him to Philippi, a woman named Lydia welcomed him:*

Acts 16:14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard [us]: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

- ***So it seems that a church was established in her home, what would become the church in Philippi! Prisoners of Hope - of course.***
- ***Servants, or Workers for Christ: Mary, Persis, Tryphena & Tryphosa, Rufus' Mother, & Nereus' Sister (Rom. 16)***
 - ***Many "workers" were needed to support those who labored in word and doctrine. And so it is today as well. Prisoners of Hope indeed.***
- ***Faithful Family Members That Made a Difference: Lois and Eunice (2 Tim. 1:3-5)***

2 Tim. 1:3-5

3 I thank God, whom I serve from [my] forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;

4 Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;

5 When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

- ***Timothy's mother and grandmother were powerfully used to promote the gospel of grace from one generation to the next, so important to the work of the Lord from generation to generation. Again, they were all Prisoners of Hope. Amen.***
- ***Persons of Privilege But Saints to be Noted: Claudia and Her Heritage (2 Tim. 4:21)***

- ***Paul's final words are written here:***

2 Tim. 4:21 Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren.

- ***Claudia was a woman of privilege Indeed from the British Isles, then a Roman colonial possession. She is mentioned here last. In Paul's last five words written before his martyrdom he includes her name. That is a position of honor indeed. All these were Prisoners of Hope.***

Introduction:

- ***The overall focus of this letter is on proper order in the churches, but the way Paul addresses that is from the top down, from heaven to earth, as it were. All here is in the context of God's sovereignty and his orderly creation that extends to mankind and the rulers of nations and churches and marriages. There is a hierarchy outlined here with implied obedience to those in charge being the constant theme.***
 - ***This is consistent with the exhortations at the end of chapter 2 if we think properly about this. Recognizing the sovereignty of Almighty God is at the heart of everything, isn't it?***

Overall Outline of the Letter:

Chapter 1: Paul our example of grace - God is sovereign - and grace has superceded the law! Chapter 1 verse 4 is one of the strongest statements of this in Paul's letters: "Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than the dispensation of God, the one which is in faith: [so do]".

Chapter 2: Submission to the authorities in the nation and in the churches

Chapter 3: The bishops and deacons and their God given authority, and the submission to the mystery teaching

Chapter 4: Timothy's responsibilities in Ephesus in light of these truths

Chapter 5: Church order among the brethren — Its several dimensions

Chapter 6: A humble but profound charge to Timothy after an exhortation to those who are slaves. The challenge is a significant one as verse 12 indicates: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called , and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."

Today's Outline: "A Heavenly Service Requires Heavenly Minded Leaders"

- ***Church Officers Must Be Heavenly Minded - The Text is Clear***
- ***Church Officers Must Be Exemplary - Their Qualifications Are Many***
- ***Paul's Heavenly Standard for His Son in the Faith, Timothy is High Indeed***

I. Church Officers Must Be Heavenly Minded - The Text is Clear:

[READ] 1 Tim. 3:1-7

1 This [is] a true saying, If a man desire the office of a **bishop**, he desireth a good work.

2 A **bishop** then must be **blameless, the husband of one wife**, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;

4 **One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;**

5 **(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)**

6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

[READ] 1 Tim. 3:8-13

8 Likewise [must] the **deacons** [be] grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;

9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a **deacon**, being [found] blameless.

11 Even so [must their] wives [be] grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.

12 Let the **deacons be the husbands of one wife**, ruling their children and their own houses well.

13 For they that have used the office of a **deacon** well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

- ***What is an “officer” in the church? It is a divinely ordained position (or office) in the church with assigned privileges and responsibilities. Officers are not to be identified with spiritual gifts. The two are very different concepts altogether.***
- ***Other references to similar Pauline exhortations:***
 - ***Tit. 1:5, 7 (Bishops & elders), 1 Tim. 5:17 (elders ruling well with an accompanying double benefit)***

II. Church Officers Must Be Exemplary - Their Qualifications Are Many:

- ***Overseers (Are Called Elders in Tit. 1:5, 7 - the same office, it seems)***

1 Tim. 3:1-7

1 This [is] a true saying, If a man desire the office of a **bishop**, he desireth a good work.

2 A **bishop** then must be **blameless, the husband of one wife**, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;

4 **One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;**

5 **(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)**

6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

[READ] Tit. 1:5-9

5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain **elders** in every city, as I had appointed thee:

6 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.

7 **For a bishop must be blameless**, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;

9 **Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.**

- ***So verse 7 indicates that the elders and the bishops are the same office.***
- ***Where are the pastors & teachers here? Those are spiritual gifts while these are offices in the local church. - see Eph. 4:11 for the list of gifts and gifted persons including pastors & teachers.***
- ***Summary: - if we put the lists together, there are 25 items!! Who can meet all of these requirements? Who? Is Paul being totally unrealistic here? To understand this better, let's look at the list of qualifications given for these offices:***

- ***A bishop then must be:***

1. **Blameless**
2. **the husband of one wife**
3. **Children, faithful and in subjection with all seriousness**
(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)
4. **vigilant**
5. **sober**
6. **of good behaviour**
7. **given to hospitality**
8. **apt to teach**
9. **Stewards of God**
10. **Not self-willed**
11. **Not soon angered**
12. **Not given to wine**
13. **No striker**
14. **Temperate**
15. **Not given to filthy lucre**
16. **Not covetous**
17. **Lover of good men**
18. **Sober**
19. **Not a brawler**
20. **Just**
21. **Patient**
22. **Holy**
23. **Of good report of those who are without the church lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.**
24. **Not a novice lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil**
25. **Holding fast the faithful word and able to convince others**

Notice that according to 1 Tim. 5:17 elders that rule well are to be blessed with a double benefit. That is wonderful to consider. But of course the receiving of that would be optional as Paul makes clear in 1 Cor. 9 & 2 Cor. 11.

- **How are such long lists of qualifications to be understood? Can anyone truly meet such a list successfully? Well, yes, of course, or Paul would not have written these letters! The apostle is speaking of character and overall pattern of living, not perfection here. So, he writes that these qualification should be honored not optionally but as a requirement for godly and an exalted and heavenly manner of service.**

- ***Now for the other classification, that of deacon. It is no less exalted in scope and meaning than that for bishop, overseer, or elder:***

- ***Deacons (or servants):***

1 Tim. 3:8-13

8 Likewise [must] the **deacons** [be] grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;

9 **Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.**

10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a **deacon**, being [found] blameless.

11 **Even so [must their] wives [be] grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.**

12 Let the **deacons be the husbands of one wife**, ruling their children and their own houses well.

13 **For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.**

- ***This is a serious list as well. Those that would serve in this office must surely be heavenly minded as the office demands it.***

There are some additions to take note of:

- ***Most important here is this: “Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.” Compare this with verse 16:***

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:

God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”

- ***This stretches us to the limits, does it not? I am reminded here of Eph. 2:***

Eph. 2:19-22

19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, **Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner [stone];**

21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

- ***An addition requirement regarding wives is included***
- ***They are, like the bishops, to be “one woman sort of man”. This is not about monogamy most likely but about character. Divorce and remarriage is prohibited but this is about something more serious indeed even than that.***

III. Paul's Heavenly Standard for His Son in the Faith, Timothy:

[READ] 1 Tim. 3:14-16

14 These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly:

15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

- ***Verse 14: The possibility of the apostle not being able to come to Ephesus soon is strongly hinted at here. He was not so sure.***
- ***Verses 15-16: The knowledge of the Mystery must dominate in ministry and teaching since that is what the apostle Paul was called forth to share. Otherwise there is inevitably such confusion in the churches. We see that in our current day, don't we? The failure to Rightly Divide the Word of Truth has fruit that we see everywhere.***

- ***Culminating Exhortation to Timothy, his son in the faith -***

Verse 15 - But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

Verse 16 - And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

Application:

- ***God's Sovereignty Should Be Honored by Our Lives - Paul's Standard is Ours!***

Next Time: The Mystery of Godliness