

Theme: Each local church must have a group of elders who shepherd the flock by God's Word, are servant leaders for those under their care, set a godly example in character and conduct, and point people to Jesus, the Chief Shepherd.

## I. Intro - Captain Kirk and Eldership

- A. I have been watching the original Star Trek
- B. A central idea - leadership of Captain Kirk
- C. He was a great Starship Commander; bold & decisive
- D. Would he be a good elder? What are the requirements to be an elder in the local church? (Catechism Q71)

## II. Understanding Elders In the New Testament

- A. Elders serve as a group together
  - To the **elders** among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: <sup>2</sup> **Be shepherds** of God's flock that is under **your** care... 1 Peter 5:1-2
    - 1. Elders, shepherd, your - all plural
    - 2. In the NT, the pattern is always multiple elders in a single location.
    - 3. Because of sin, it is not wise to invest authority in a single person - they rarely have the character to handle such a situation well.
- B. Elders are shepherds who care for the flock (church)
  - To the **elders** among you, I appeal as a **fellow elder**, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: <sup>2</sup> **Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care**... 1 Peter 5:1-2
    - 1. Peter is writing to elders as a fellow elder

- 2. The first, primary command - be shepherds!
- 3. A local church is God's flock, elders are to be shepherds
- 4. This is the most common title, metaphor, and description of elders and their call
  - Keep watch over** yourselves and all **the flock** of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. **Be shepherds of the church of God**, which he bought with his own blood. <sup>29</sup> I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. <sup>30</sup> Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. Acts 20:28-30
    - a. Paul is speaking to the elders of the church in Ephesus
    - b. They are to keep watch over the flock, be shepherds
    - c. They must guard against wolves - false teachers  - It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be **pastors** and teachers, Ephesians 4:11
    - a. Jesus gave leaders to the church to equip Her
    - b. Pastors - literally shepherds
    - c. Pastor is not a separate office from elder; an elder is a pastor-teacher of God's flock
- 5. This is based on the fact that Jesus is the Chief Shepherd and Overseer
  - <sup>2:25</sup> For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the **Shepherd and Overseer of your souls**... <sup>5:4</sup> And when **the Chief Shepherd** appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. 1 Peter 2:25; 5:4

- a. Jesus is the Chief Shepherd and Overseer (same words as used of elders in 1 Peter 5:2)
- b. Jesus is a Shepherd who Oversees and cares for a flock - and this is the model all elders are to follow

6. This must guide how elders view themselves and perform their task - they are elder, not CEO's, business managers, or "vision casters" - they are primarily those who care for the people of God.

#### C. Elders primarily shepherd the flock by the Word of God

1. Peter does this throughout the letter - quotes Scripture to shepherd the readers.
2. In Acts 20 the wolves are false teachers who must be refuted by the elders as they teach the Word of God
3. Elders are called to speak the Word of God  
Remember **your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you**. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Hebrews 13:7
  - a. Leaders in the church must speak God's Word
  - b. The primary way we shepherd the souls of others is by the Word of God.
4. This is why Paul says elders must be apt to teach  
Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, **able to teach**, 1 Tim 3:2
  - a. Not necessarily public preaching, but the elder must know God's Word and be able to help others understand and apply God's Word to their own life.
  - b. This is an essential qualification for an elder. No matter how many leadership qualities they possess, if they can not help others understand and apply God's Word they can not shepherd the church.

5. The Word of God is also the limit of the elders' authority - they must restrict themselves to what the Scripture teaches and not force their own preferences.

6. Ultimately, authority rests in God and His Word, not the elders.

#### D. Elders are servant leaders

Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers — not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but **eager to serve; <sup>3</sup> not lording it over those entrusted to you**, but being examples to the flock. 1 Peter 5:2–3

1. Eager to serve, not lording - a specific type of leadership
2. This is ALWAYS the NT pattern for leaders  
Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. <sup>26</sup> But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. Luke 22:25–26
  - a. The worldly pattern of leadership - lord it over others
  - b. Leadership among God's people must NOT be like that, but must follow the pattern of serving those under our care.
  - c. This has been a major problem throughout church history and continues today when men lead in a worldly way, using the people to accomplish the leader's vision rather than serving the people as God's flock.
  - d. NEVER submit to a team of elders who love their authority! Look for those who serve!

- E. Elders are to be examples in character and conduct not lording it over those entrusted to you, but **being examples to the flock...** <sup>5</sup> All of you, **clothe yourselves with humility toward one another**, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." <sup>1</sup> Peter 5:3, 5
1. Examples to the flock - showing what it looks like to follow Christ and apply God's Word to daily life.
  2. The call to humility flows from the humble servant leadership displayed by the elders.
  3. Elders are to set an example in character and in a pattern of life that others can follow  
Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. **Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.** Hebrews 13:7
  4. This is why the majority of the qualifications for being an elder are character traits, not leadership qualities.
  5. This is also why the requirements include how the elder conducts himself in his home. A man who is harsh with his wife or neglects his children's behavior and spiritual development will almost always repeat the same pattern in the church.
  6. Never submit to leaders whose character is questionable or unbiblical. No matter how charismatic they are or how strong their leadership traits, such elders can not fulfill the biblical call that leads to true flourishing among the flock.

- F. Elders point people to Jesus, the Chief Shepherd  
And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away... <sup>7</sup> Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. <sup>1</sup> Peter 5:4, 7
1. Elders always remember they are only under-shepherds! Jesus is the Chief Shepherd!
  2. Elders must relentlessly point people to Jesus, and help them cultivate a personal relationship with Him so that they can cast their cares on Him.
  3. Elders are not trying to draw people to themselves but to Jesus!
  4. No human leader can satisfy your soul or care for you through the valleys of life. What you need is to learn how to draw close to Jesus, and the primary goal of elders (and all other Christians) must be to help each of us draw close to Him!

### III. Applying the Word

- A. Thanks to and commendation of our current elders
1. I want to give thanks to our current elders - I am glad to be a fellow elder along with them!
  2. These men are all servants of Christ and walking in accord with these qualifications
  3. We do not have the same gifts, nor do we always agree at first, but as a team these elders love and care for this flock!
  4. I commend this eldership to you, and ask for you to pray for us - we need God's guidance, wisdom, and protection so that we may shepherd the flock well!

## B. Responding to the Shepherd (Jesus)

1. I encourage you to respond to these under-shepherds - and ultimately to the Chief Shepherd
2. God calls each of us to receive from the leaders He has placed in our midst

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. Hebrews 13:17

- a. God calls us to submit and make leadership a joy, not a burden
  - b. This has been a tough year to lead - but many of you have been very encouraging to us as leaders as we try to lead in this unusual season! Thank you!!
  - c. Please continue to pray for us, and to encourage us as we follow God.
3. The best way to support and encourage us - draw close to Jesus, the Chief Shepherd of your soul!  
For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls. 1 Peter 2:25

- a. Jesus is the True Shepherd and Overseer
- b. Our greatest joy is seeing you draw near to Him!
- c. This year has been very disruptive - use that to draw near to Jesus!

## C. The Lord's Table - fed by the Shepherd

1. The Lord is our Shepherd - and He feeds His sheep
2. Come to the Table & be fed by your Him today!

## The Church - Elders

1 Peter 5:1-7

October 18, 2020

Communion

Hebrews 13:20-21

Teaching keywords: Church; catechism; leadership

May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, <sup>21</sup> equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Hebrews 13:20–21

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: <sup>2</sup> Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers — not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; <sup>3</sup> not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. <sup>4</sup> And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. <sup>5</sup> Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." <sup>6</sup> Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. <sup>7</sup> Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. 1 Peter 5:1–7