

## 6) LESSONS FROM 1. EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

### *Chapter 3:3-7*

#### **I.**

#### ***Introduction***

The past Sunday I opened the subject on role of bishop in the local church and discussed first set of qualifications set by Holy Spirit that any Christian man must fulfill in order that he may desire to do the work of bishop.

We also considered the expression “the office/position of a bishop”, which comes from Greek word *episkope* that is defined as inspection */dohled/* (for relief); by implication */nepřimo/*, superintendence */dozor/*; specially, the Christian "episcopate":--the office of a "bishop", bishoprick */biskupství/*, visitation */navštívení/*.

I would like remind you that the office/position of a bishop is a role of a special servant of the Word of God who cares for spiritual welfare – salvation - of others. It is a role appointed by God for local assemblies – churches - of his people. When speaking about work of bishop, the word “role” seems to be more appropriate than “office” which is associated with authority or power over others, or “position” which is associated with elevated rank above other people.

Bishop (in Greek: *episkopos*) is the person who does the actual work and bears the responsibility.

Today we will look the rest of the qualifications one must fulfill to do the work of bishop and their tasks.

#### **II.**

### *Chapter 3:3-7*

#### ***Qualifications of a bishop***

Let's read 1. Timothy 3:1-7:

*1Ti 3:1 ¶ 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; {of good...: or, modest}*

*3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; {given...: or, ready to quarrel, and offer wrong, as one in wine}*

*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. {a novice: or, one newly come to the faith}*

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

Let's deal with individual qualifications beginning from verse 3 to get a picture of the character of a Christian man who can desire to do the work of bishop:

1] Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous: He cannot be a slave to alcohol, passions (no striker, not a brawler) or money (not greedy of filthy lucre, not covetous), but he must be appropriate in his words and deeds – exercising self control, gentle, patient.

2] One that ruleth well his own house: This does not mean that a bishop must be a house owner. The house here simply refers to family, home, household. He must rule well his family – love his wife as Jesus loved church and bring up his children in the Lord:

Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; (KJV)

Eph 6:4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. (KJV)

3] Having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?): I will deal with this qualification in more detail later. For the time being, one implication of this verse is that a Christian man who doesn't have children at all, is disqualified from fulfilling the role of a bishop.

4] Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil: This simply means that a man who aspires for work of a bishop cannot be a new in Christian faith so that he would not be overcome with pride and would not start acting like another Diotrephes.

5] Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil: Beside having a good report from the members of a local church, he must also have a good report from those who are not members of the local church. This goes back to him being blameless - loving God and His Word, thus loving also other Christians and neighbours. If a man aspiring to do the work of a bishop, does not have a good report from those who are not members of the local church (e.g. Christians from different local church, neighbours, colleges at work), then it casts doubts on his character.

Let's notice another passage that deals with the qualifications of a bishop:

*Tit 1:5 ¶ For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders (in Greek: presbuteros) in every city, as I had appointed thee: {wanting: or, left undone}*

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

*7 For a bishop (in Greek: episkopos) 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; {men: or, things}*

*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. {as...: or, in teaching} (KJV)*

First, let's notice that Titus 1:5-7 identifies a bishop with an elder (*in Greek: presbuteros*), which is another term used in the NT Scriptures for the man who does the same work and bears the same responsibility.

Then, Let's notice that the qualifications in 1. Timothy 3:2-3 are basically the same as in Titus 1:6-9. The qualification in 1. Timothy 3:4 related to children differs from Titus 1:6. The qualifications

in 1. Timothy 3:6-7 are mentioned only here.

Apparently, the situation in Ephesus where Timothy worked and situation in Crete where Titus worked were different and this explains two sets of qualifications that overlap partially. That means we need to combine them and take into consideration the rest of the Scriptures as well to get a complete picture of qualifications for elders. This is nothing unique for Bible. In similar fashion there is not one text in the New Testament that list all requirements for salvation.

Now, I am going to deal with the qualification where Timothy and Titus differ.

*1Ti 3:4 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?)*

*Tit 1:6 ¶ If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.*

We can be sure of one thing, and that is that difference here is not due to a contradiction, because not only both letters are written by the same writer, apostle Paul, but mainly because Paul was inspired by Holy Spirit.

The simplified explanation is that this is one qualification related to children worded with a different emphasis in these two passages.

1Ti 3:4-5: A bishop must have his children in subjection with all gravity */s veškerou vážností/*. Let me clarify that we do not speak here of little kids, because they are not capable of subjecting themselves to their father with all gravity. We speak here of children who are capable of the faith in God, because they are capable of subjecting themselves to their father with all gravity. These children may already be physically grown up, but they still live in their father's home (v. 5). Father is to rule his home well and part of that is that his children, regardless of their adulthood must be subjected to him with all gravity. That includes not only outward subjection, but also inward subjection based on conviction (believe) that this is the right thing to do. Bishop as a father must lay foundations for this conviction by bringing his children up in the Lord. Only then it would be natural for the children to create such conviction and inward subjection based upon the conviction. Conviction of adult children for their subjection to their father's authority makes sense in the light of their conviction of their subjection to God's authority on the first place. My conclusion is that in order that this would be possible, these children have to be Christians and this qualification emphasizes their subjection to God and their father.

Tit 1:6: A bishop must have faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.

The word faithful is a translation of Greek word "pistos".

Pistos is defined as follows: objectively, trustworthy; subjectively, trustful:--believe(-ing, -r), faithful(-ly), sure, true.

Let's look how pistos is used by Holy Spirit in the Scriptures:

1] Joh 20:27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither

thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless (in Greek: apistos), but believing (in Greek: pistos).

Joh 20:28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

Joh 20:29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed (in Greek: pisteuo): blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed (in Greek: pisteuo).

Thomas did not believe that Jesus was resurrected because he did not see Jesus after His resurrection. Here Jesus called on Thomas to touch His wounds and to not be faithless, but believing. Thomas' answer "My Lord and my God" and Jesus' response "because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed", indicates that this is the belief that Jesus expected from Thomas.

Therefore faithful (pistos) here is used in the sense of believing in Christ.

2] Ac 16:14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple of the city of Thyatira, one that worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul.

Ac 16:15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful (in Greek: pistos) to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

Lydia believed in Christ and was baptized. Then she asked Paul and his companions to come into her house if they judged here to be faithful to the Lord.

Therefore faithful (pistos) here is used in the sense of loyalty, obedience to Christ.

3] Lu 12:42 And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful (in Greek: pistos) and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?

43 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

Faithful servant in this parable is loyal and obedient to his lord.

So must a bishop have children who are faithful (loyal, obedient) to their physical father because they are faithful (loyal, obedient) to Christ on the first place and are not accused of riot or unruly? Or can a bishop have children who are faithful (loyal, obedient) to their physical father without being faithful (loyal, obedient) to Christ on the first place and are not accused of riot or unruly? Their subjection with all gravity (1. Ti 3:4) points out to more than mere obedience to their physical father and not being profligate /zhýralí/ or uncontrolled. Beside, there is logical discrepancy in children being faithful (loyal, obedient) to their physical father without being faithful (loyal, obedient) to God on the first place. My conclusion is that bishop's children, at least those of them who live under his roof and are capable of subjection with all gravity (they are not little children) have to be Christians.

### ***Evaluation of the qualifications of a bishop***

Why is it important that bishop is blameless, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; patient, ruling well his own family, having his children in subjection with all gravity, is mature in faith, has a good report from those who are without?

Because he is a servant of God serving others with the Word of God, caring for their spiritual welfare – salvation. Therefore he must do honor to God with his words and deeds. He must be an example to others. He must be a man whom people trust, have him in high esteem and are willing to listen to him.

Who would care for a bishop who lives in sin, speaks and acts evil, is incapable to teach, is slave to wine, passions and money, cannot rule his own family, has miserable children, is proud and has very bad reputation from those without? Such man would be lost because of his own sins and would need a profound spiritual help. How could he help others?

### ***What are the main tasks of a bishop?***

#### *1) Teach the Word of God:*

1Ti 3:2 Now a bishop must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sensible, dignified, hospitable, an apt teacher.

Tit 1:9 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. {as...: or, in teaching}

#### *2) Care for God's church:*

1Ti 3:5 for if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how can he care for God's church?

Tit 1:7 For a bishop (in Greek: episkopos) must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

I said with my own words that bishop is a special servant of the Word of God, who cares for spiritual welfare of others. Here the Scriptures mark him as a steward of God.

### ***IV. Conclusion***

God put the role of bishop in the local church. Without bishops the local church is not complete. Yet, the role of a bishop cannot be filled out without meeting proper qualifications set by Holy Spirit. The compromise in matter of bishop's qualifications for sake of having a bishop is as serious and with far reaching consequences as compromise in any other thing bound by God. Once the door is opened for going beyond the authority of God's Word, it will make it possible for other even more strange doctrines to creep into the minds and hearts of Christians. Therefore we need to understand and apply qualifications for the work of a bishop correctly.

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