

## INTRODUCTION

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ Is Lovingly Attending to Us, His Church

The Son of God came down here because God loved the world

- He did not create the universe, set it in motion, then leave it
- instead, He always is working, attending to His creation
- in rebellion against God, the nations went their own ways, each person separating himself from God by his or her sins

For what seems to us a long time, God allowed the people of the world to go their own ways, following their own lusts, bowing down before idols that they had made out of wood and stone and metal

Yet He did not leave Himself without a witness; He showed the people that He was there, and that He cared for them, by giving them rain and fertile soil for their food to grow, satisfying them with the good things they needed

- that witness to God care for you should set you thinking about Him
- feeling the happiness of pleasant weather, good food, a comfortable bed, friendship, family, music, and all other good things should make you know that God is benevolent; that He is good
- knowing inside yourself that you have not been serving your Creator and Provider, but have been doing as you please, even against His law should make you mourn inside over how you have been responding to His great kindness to you

Then, at just the right time, in love for those who did not love Him, God sent for His own Son, who took on our humanity as Jesus the Christ

the perfect man Jesus Christ died for benefit of and in the place of the ungodly

- it had happened before, and it has happened since, that someone is willing to die for the good of someone else; but it is an exceptional, newsworthy thing because it doesn't happen often
- but it had never happened before, and it will never happen again, that Someone who was utterly blameless, and not deserving death Himself in the least, died for countless sinners who did deserve death, taking their death penalty upon Himself
- and that is what God did for us through His own Son Jesus Christ, who died the cruel death of crucifixion, being nailed to a cross for our sake
- by His own shed blood, He bought for Himself an assembly, a congregation, a church

Jesus Christ the blameless died for His church; but on the third day, the first day of the week, He rose again from the dead to live forevermore  
He also ascended to heaven, to take the throne there, and to rule until all enemies are under His feet

-from that throne, He is engaged in the ongoing work of gathering us one-by-one into that one great flock consisting of all who turn from sins and trust in Him

In His great love for those for whom He died, the Lord Jesus Christ is setting those whom He saves into churches, local churches all over the world; and He is caring for each of those churches

By the time this letter was written, our Lord Jesus already had ascended back to heaven, and so was not here with us personally.

-so we did not receive this command, that a bishop must be blameless, from our Lord Jesus directly

-for that reason, sometimes we can be tempted not to take such things as from our Lord Himself

But when our Lord's apostles, as Peter, John, Paul, wrote to the churches, they were writing the will of Jesus Christ in heaven

-the writings that make up the Bible, the holy Scriptures, were written as the Holy Spirit of God, sent by Jesus Christ, carried the authors along, breathing out through them the Word of God

-Paul wrote, 1 Corinthians 14:37 If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that **the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.**

And the apostles commanded the same things in all the churches; their command written to one church applies to all

-1 Corinthians 14:33 For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, **as in all the churches** of the saints.

-1 Corinthians 7:17 But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk. And **so I ordain in all the churches.**

So, what we read and study here today, although written by mere men long ago and far away, is yet our Lord Jesus Christ's loving care for this church.

We are working today still on the command in verse 2, "A bishop then must be blameless." Last time, we focused on what is meant by "blameless" in this context. Today we look to see what it means that a bishop must be blameless.

## TEXT

1 Timothy 3:1-7

## BODY

As I have studied into this, I have found two things that make up what it means here that a bishop must be blameless.

- I. The Church Is Allowed By Jesus Christ to Appoint a Man to the Office of Bishop If and Only If He is Blameless
  - A. Titus 1:5-7a
    1. NKJV For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you-- (6) **if a man is blameless**, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. (7) **For a bishop must be blameless...**
    2. GEN If any be unproveable...For a Bishop must be unproveable
    3. KJV If any be blameless...For a bishop must be blameless
    4. ESV if anyone is above reproach...For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach
  - B. From the perspective of the church:
    1. the church is to undertake the process of appointing an elder, a pastor, a bishop in the church IF AND ONLY IF some man is blameless, unproveable, above reproach
    2. if there is no such man available, the church may not appoint anyone an elder, pastor, bishop at that time
    3. this is not a permanent condition
      - a) the church can pray and work and wait
      - b) the church can call on the other churches to supply a man
  - C. From the perspective of an individual man:
    1. a man who desires the office of bishop, but whom the church does not judge to be blameless, may not be made a bishop

- D. It is the church that judges whether a man is blameless
1. you may have noticed a phenomenon in churches, where a man, or even a woman, claims to have been called by God into the ministry, and he, or even she, is set in office in the church on that basis
    - a) that is a corruption of what the Bible tells us
    - b) that is part of what we as “Reformed Baptists” seek to be reformed from
  2. originally in the episode with Moses and Jethro, the people chose
  3. in the episode with the choosing of the original seven deacons, the people chose
  4. so the congregation, the church, judges by a vote of the members
  5. those already in office
    - a) lead the church in the process
    - b) set those men elected into their office by laying on of hands
- E. Remember the promises that God made through the prophets, which we read a few weeks ago: in the days of the New Covenant, God would provide His people with good shepherds
1. if we appoint men not blameless to the office of bishop we are not trusting God’s promises
  2. let us appoint only the blameless to office in the church, and trust that God will bless us through their ministry

The church is allowed by Jesus Christ to appoint a man to the office of bishop if and only if he is blameless

## II. The Church Can Rightly Expect the Good Work It Needs Done to Be Done Only By a Man Who Is Blameless

- A. See “then” or “therefore” indicating the reason
  1. GEN a worthe worke. A Bishop therefore must be unreproueable
  2. KJV, NKJV a good work. A bishop then must be blameless
  3. ESV a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach
- B. The work to be done by a bishop is a good work, a worthe work, a noble work, an excellent work, an important work, a beneficial work.
  1. the work of a bishop is the work of a shepherd, feeding and guarding the sheep
  2. the work of a bishop is the work of a steward, distributing food to the household
- C. So crucial to the church’s welfare is the work of the church’s officers, that only men judged blameless are to be chosen for office.
  1. if a man who is not blameless is set in church office, it should be expected that his faults will be exploited by the church’s enemies to trip him up, so that he will not do the work the church needs to be done
  2. if a man who is blameless is set in church office, it should be expected that the church’s enemies will not be able to trip him up, so that he will do the work the church needs to be done
  3. so that is part of what it means that a bishop must be blameless

- D. Example: Titus 1:10-11 For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: (11) Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. [NKJV for the sake of dishonest gain; ESV for shameful gain]
1. sometimes the church is dealing with people who are leading whole households astray by their false doctrine
  2. the work the church needs done is for those false teachers to be opposed, so that members of the church are not led astray by them
  3. those false teachers are doing what they are doing for the sake of getting money out of it
  4. what kind of man does it take to oppose them? a man who is not motivated by money like they are
  5. and this is the very way the Bible says a bishop must be
    - a) Titus 1:7 For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money
      - (1) GEN, KJV given to filthy lucre
      - (2) ESV greedy for gain
  6. if the church makes a man a bishop who is given to filthy lucre, who is greedy for money, it cannot reasonably expect that he will oppose those who are teaching falsely because they are greedy for money
  7. but if the church only makes a man a bishop if he is blameless in the sense of not being given to filthy lucre; not being greedy for money or gain, the church reasonably can expect that such a man will be able to oppose those false teachers who are motivated by money

E. Example: 2 Timothy 2:23-26 But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. (24) And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, (25) in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, (26) and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

1. sometimes foolish and ignorant disputes create strife in the church (2 Tim 2:23)
2. those disputes and that strife are caused by some in the church who are opposing the teaching of what is true (2 Tim 2:25)
  - a) GEN them...that are contrary minded
  - b) KJV those that oppose themselves
  - c) NKJV those who are in opposition
  - d) ESV his opponents
3. such people in the church who are opposing the truth are (2 Tim 2:26)
  - a) caught in a snare of the devil
  - b) taken captive by him
  - c) doing his will
4. the church needs those opposing the truth to be corrected by instruction; if so corrected by instruction, God may grant them repentance so that they acknowledge the truth and stop opposing it (2 Tim 2:25)
  - a) they will thus be rescued from captivity to the devil
  - b) and the will of the devil, which is to cause strife, will not be done in the church
5. what kind of man does it take to do that work, which the church needs done? a man who will not try to deal with strife by fighting, brawling, quarrelling, but will diffuse strife by gentleness and patience, in all humility teaching and correcting the opposers (2 Tim 2:24-25)
6. and that is what is required of a man by our Lord's command that a bishop must be blameless
  - a) 1 Timothy 3:2-3 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; (3) not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous;
    - (1) able to teach; apt to teach
    - (2) gentle; patient
    - (3) no fighter; not a brawler; not quarrelsome

## CONCLUSION

The church is allowed by Jesus Christ to appoint a man to the office of bishop if and only if he is blameless

The church can rightly expect the good work it needs done to be done only by a man who is blameless

Let us, then, obey the Lord Jesus in the matter of appointing bishops in the church.

Let us pray to God through Him, that He will raise up such men for us from within this congregation, and that He will send such men to us.

Let each man aspire to be blameless, so that he can be available to serve in office, should the church need him.

Thad - Call to Worship and Opening Prayer - Revelation 4:8-11

Chris - Scripture Reading - Psalm 92

Roel - Congregational Prayer

Jeff - Benediction - 2 Peter 3:13-14

Anna - Prelude (please choose something)

Anna - Trinity 87 "Holy, Holy, Holy"

Anna - Trinity 535 "How Good It Is to Thank the Lord" (Psalm 92)

Allison - Trinity 719 "A Shelter in the Time of Storm"



What does it mean for the Bible to say that a bishop must be blameless?

**must be** G1163 *dei* G1511 *einai*

It does not mean that once a man is made a bishop, it is incumbent upon him to become blameless.

In this church, it so happened that one of the church elders was conducting himself in such ways that I finally admitted to myself that he could no longer rightly be considered blameless.

If to begin being a bishop, a man must be judged blameless, it follows that to continue being a bishop-, a man must continue to be judged blameless.

NOT that a man must be all of these things to be saved! Jesus Christ fits this description perfectly, but no one else fits it perfectly. But through faith in Jesus, we are counted or reckoned to fit it perfectly.

Thad - Call to Worship and Opening Prayer - Revelation 4:8-11

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### **given to filthy lucre**

if you notice that a man's tastes are extravagant; he spends much more money than seems modest in your setting

if you notice that a man never seems satisfied with what standard of living he has achieved

if you notice that a man's conversation is constantly about buying things

if you notice that a man's ideas about making money are not confined to what is just and to what is legal

that is technically legal, but not just

that is not itself unjust, but it is illegal

the competition is complying with the law, but he is not, and so he has an unfair advantage, and that is not entirely just

Example of the principle behind this commandment

at a hospital there are all kind of work that needs to be done

food needs to be prepared

sheets need to be washed

everything needs to be cleaned

all the machinery needs to be maintained

much of that work can be entrusted to anyone who seems able and willing to do it but the actual medical care, such as making diagnoses, performing surgeries, prescribing medicines, administering those medicines, are such a work that a man or woman must go through a demanding course of study and pass certain tests and become a licensed physician or a registered nurse in order to be assigned those kinds duties