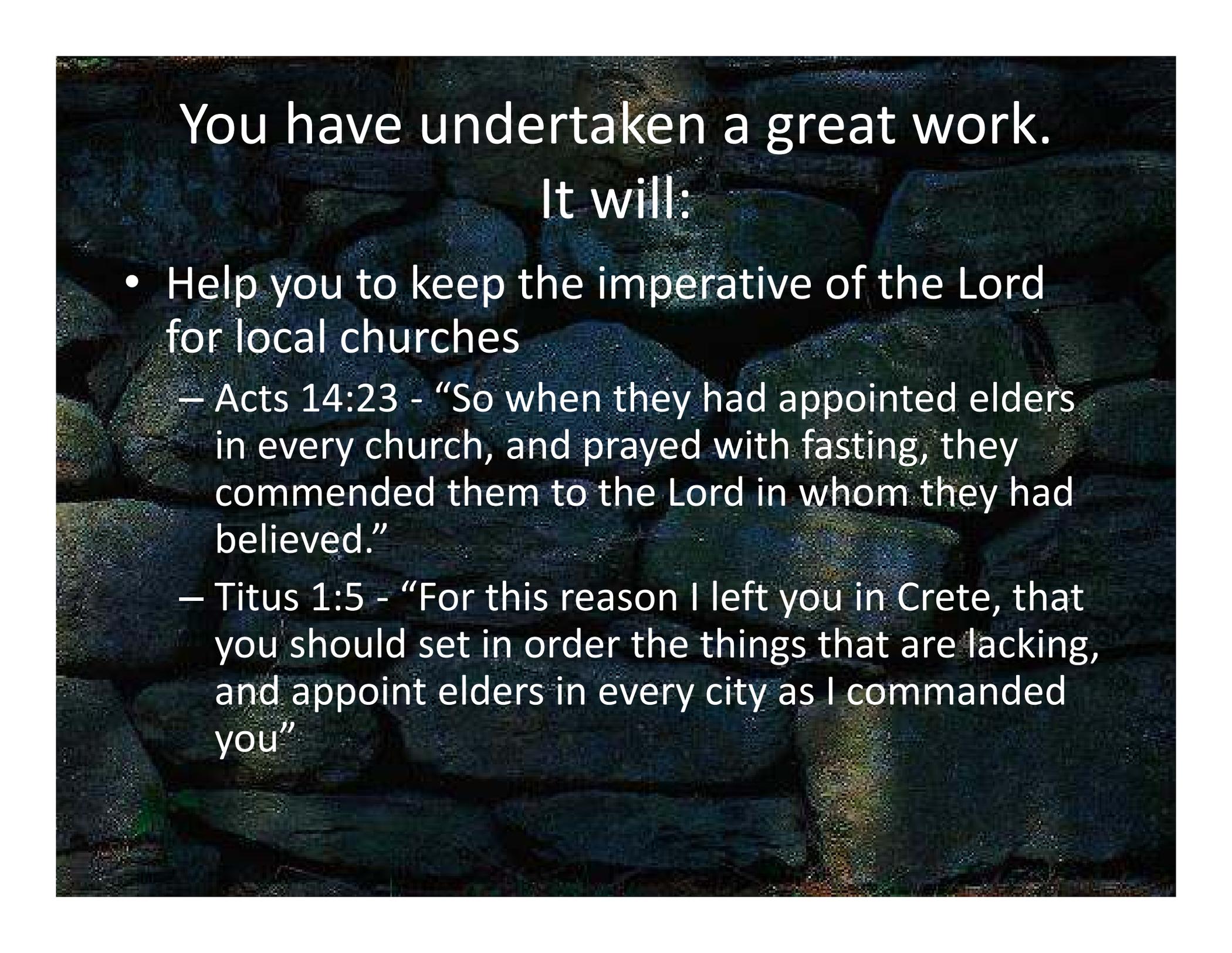


Desiring a Good Work

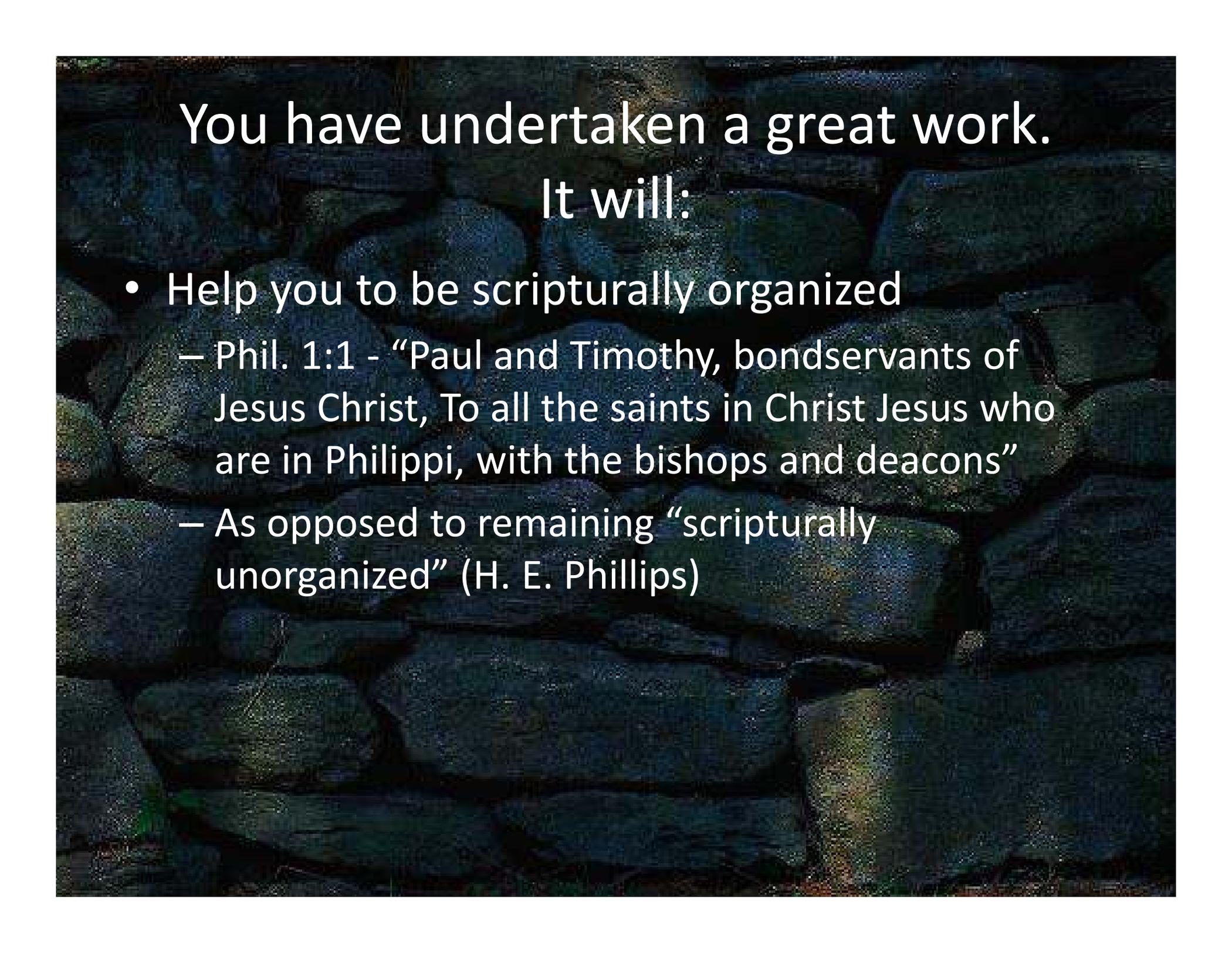
Sermon on the Eldership for the
Marietta/Reno church of Christ,
Monday, March 19, 2012



You have undertaken a great work.

It will:

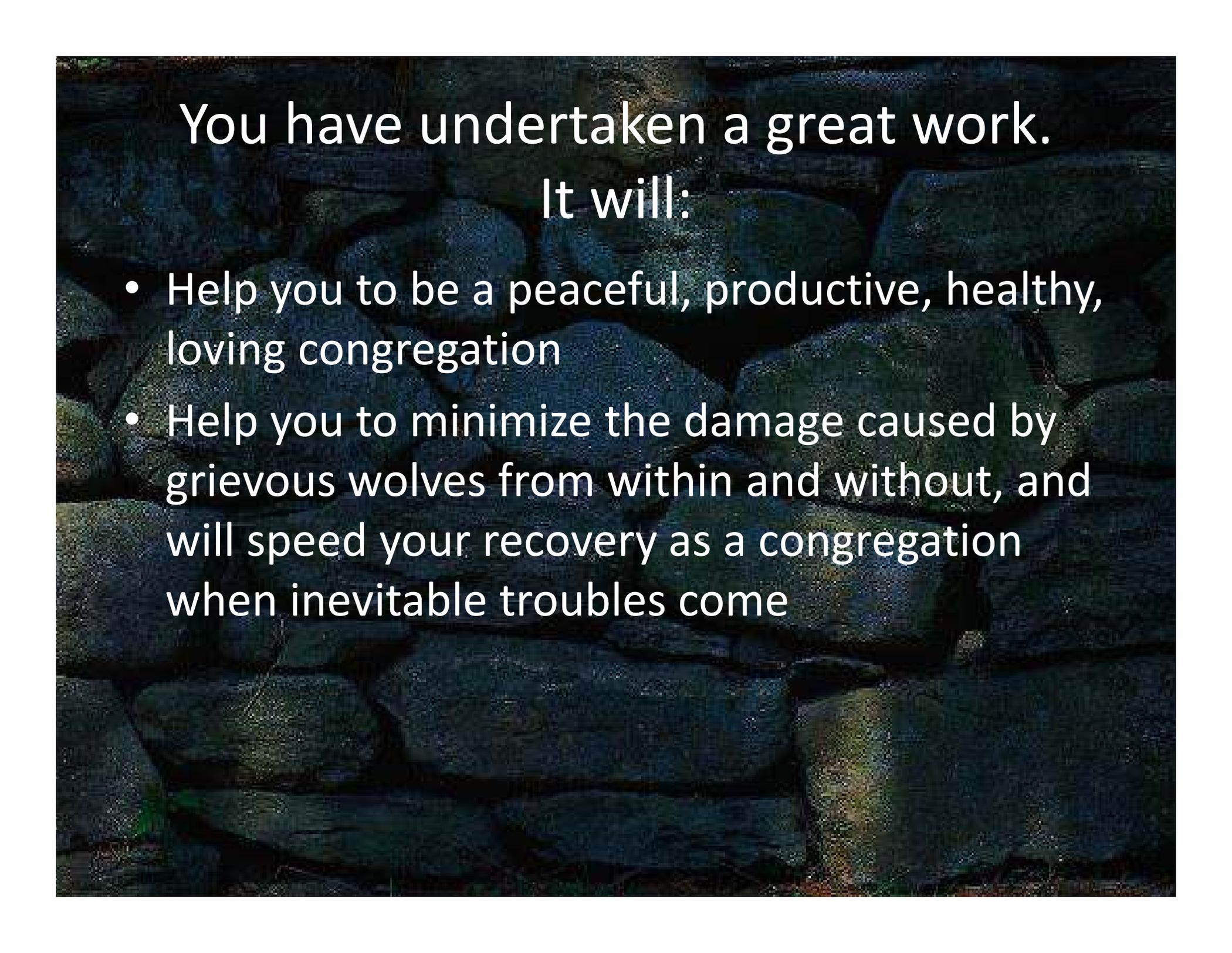
- Help you to keep the imperative of the Lord for local churches
 - Acts 14:23 - “So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.”
 - Titus 1:5 - “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you”



You have undertaken a great work.

It will:

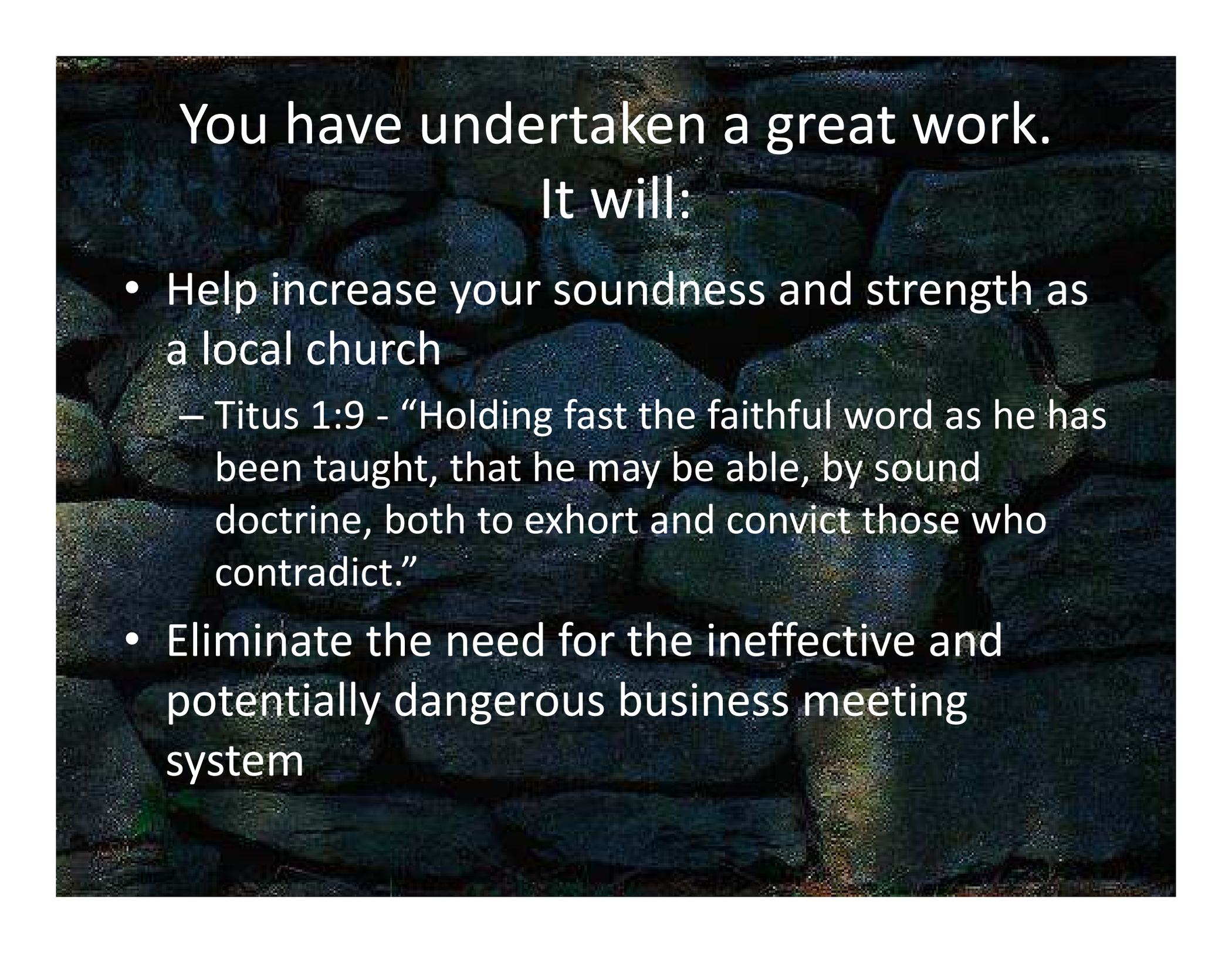
- Help you to be scripturally organized
 - Phil. 1:1 - “Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons”
 - As opposed to remaining “scripturally unorganized” (H. E. Phillips)



You have undertaken a great work.

It will:

- Help you to be a peaceful, productive, healthy, loving congregation
- Help you to minimize the damage caused by grievous wolves from within and without, and will speed your recovery as a congregation when inevitable troubles come



You have undertaken a great work.

It will:

- Help increase your soundness and strength as a local church
 - Titus 1:9 - “Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.”
- Eliminate the need for the ineffective and potentially dangerous business meeting system

I Was Asked To Speak On The Following Matters:

- My perspectives on the work of elders
- Is “desire the office” a qualification?
- The qualification “blameless”
- Some things an elder can expect to encounter; matters we normally don’t talk about when we study the qualifications, but need to be considered part of the responsibility

If A Man Desires The Position Of A Bishop, He Desires A Good Work

- Desires - Greek “oregomai - to stretch oneself, reach out after, long for, desire” (Strong's)
- What one does voluntarily is more highly esteemed than what he does when asked
 - 1Cor. 16:15 - “I urge you, brethren--you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints”

If A Man Desires The Position Of A Bishop, He Desires A Good Work

- It ought to be the desire of every Christian man in his youth to develop these qualities and become an elder when he matures
- 18 of the 22 qualifications are characteristics ALL Christian men should have
- Office - There is no Greek word for "office." The phrase literally translates as the "ministry or service as Bishop."
- It is not a position of legislative or executive authority; it is a stewardship

If A Man Desires The Position Of A Bishop, He Desires A Good Work

- 1Peter 5:2-4 - “Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.”
- Acts 20:28 - “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”

If A Man Desires The Position Of A Bishop, He Desires A Good Work

- The NIV calls this work a “noble task”
 - It is work! You will lose sleep for weeks over church problems
 - It is pressure! You will be constantly aware of the responsibility for the souls placed in your care
 - It is the closest you will come to the sacrifice of our Lord, and you will help your brethren in proportion to your own sacrifices

But Is It A Qualification?

- It is due to the logical fallacy of “false categorical imperative” that we include it in the list of qualifications.
 - It appears similar; therefore, it must be the same.
 - We also include it, because in our time very few brethren want to do the work

Without Reproach

- Blameless (KJV) - Greek anepilhpton - Literally means “cannot be laid hold of, inculpable, un-rebukeable” (Strong's)
- To live in a way that charges of wrong doing are not believable and are clearly out of one's proven character or cannot be reliably proven.
- The Holy Spirit does not require that an elder must be above sin, but that he corrects his sins as God instructs
 - 1John 1:6-10
- Does not mean sinless; it means without reproach. Has a good name.

Without Reproach

- There is nothing in his life that enemy could use against him to ruin his influence.
- When anyone has something against him, he goes to that one and resolves the matter in a Christ-like manner
 - Matt. 5:23-24

Qualifications or Disqualifications

- Many people turn the 22 characteristics of elders into 22 disqualifications by setting arbitrary standards
- The extent to which every man has these characteristics will vary from one man to another, and his aptness for the work will vary from one local church to another
 - Do not elevate the standard to the point that no man qualifies.
 - In my experience, most men who do that, do so because they are not qualified themselves and are unwilling to submit to a leadership that does not include them

Applications

- Both of these matters are critical in doing the work of an elder
 - You must strongly desire to be a servant the Lord and of your brethren in a self-less, sacrificial manner in order to be motivated to do the work
 - You will find a reputation for integrity and honor of blamelessness to be your most effective assets in this work

Applications

- By the grace of God we have come through the trials with the church growing in love, faith, and number
 - The elders consider their service to be the most important work they will ever do
 - The elders love the souls in their charge and are extremely protective of them
 - The elders resolved to work together harmoniously regardless of the issue