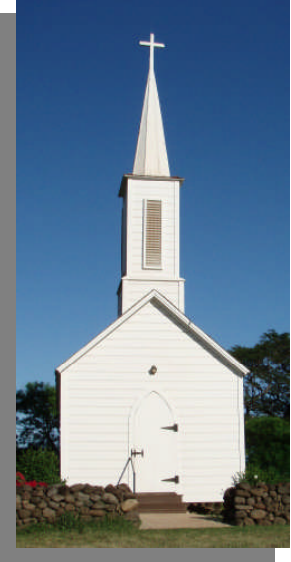




"What Makes a Christian Leader?"

1 Peter 5:1-2: (NKJV) *"¹The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: ²Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;"*



If you look around the world we live in, you will see all kinds of crises. There are worldwide political, ecological, and social crises. There are family and religious crises. There are national crises of debt, jobs and economy. With all of these varied crises, there is one element that is common to all. I would go as far as to say that if this one element were firm and stable, then the crisis associated with it would be far less of a crisis and much more of an issue. This one element is Leadership. With it, there is a past track record, a present direction and a future vision. Without it, there is - well, without it there is crisis and with that crisis there is diminished hope. While we are not in a position to address most of the crises just mentioned, we will take this morning and address Leadership in Christianity - how important is it and what gives one the ability and the authority to lead?

Questions for consideration:

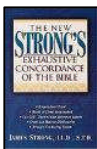
1. Who are Christianity's leaders, as described in the Bible?
2. What qualifies someone to be such a leader?

1. Who are Christianity's leaders, as described in the Bible?

This is a TOUGH question and depending on what denomination you belong to, you would have a very different answer. Let's look at a scriptural example:

Matthew 16:18: (NRSV) *"And I tell you, you are **Peter <4074>**, and on this **rock <4073>** I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it."*

The name "Peter" means "rock". One of the traditional interpretations of this verse seems to indicate that Peter was to be the foundation of the Christian Church - Our Catholic friends would (I think) say that based upon this text, Peter was the first Pope. Let's look further and give you our perspective.



Peter: Strong's #4074. Petros (pet'-ros); apparently a primary word; a (piece of) rock; as a name, Petrus, an apostle

New American Standard Greek Lexicon: a stone or a boulder; Peter, one of the twelve apostles

This specific word is always translated "Peter."

So, in **Matthew 16:18**, Peter is a name - a given name which signifies a rock. Does this mean that Peter is the "rock" that the church was to be built upon?

The word "rock" in this verse is slightly different:

Rock: Strong's #4073 petra (pet'-ra); a (mass of) rock (literally or figuratively)



New American Standard Greek Lexicon: a (large mass of) rock

So, how was this second word used elsewhere?

Matthew 7:24: "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock <4073>:"

Mark 15:46: "And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock <4073>, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre."

Romans 9:33: "As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock <4073> of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."

1 Corinthians 10:4: "And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock <4073> that followed them: and that Rock <4073> was Christ."

"Peter" <4074> is only used as the name of Peter; however "rock" <4073> often is a picture of Christ.

Now, let's go back to the context of Matthew 16:16 to see what Jesus is saying and test our conclusion:

Matthew 16:13-18: (NRSV) ¹³Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" ¹⁴And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. ¹⁸And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it."

What does the story tell us about the relationship of Peter, the rock, to the rock as the foundation of Christianity?

Our thought is that Peter revealed who the rock was - Christ Jesus.

Jesus himself verifies he is the foundation - the sole "rock" of the True Church:

1 Corinthians 3:9-14: (NRSV) ⁹For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building. ¹⁰According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. Each builder must choose with care how to build on it. ¹¹For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ. ¹²Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw ¹³the work of each builder will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done. ¹⁴If what has been built on the foundation survives, the builder will receive a reward."

The foundation is separate from what was built, enduring forever - it is Jesus Christ. When Jesus said, "You are Peter," he is saying, "You are strong! You are a rock!" And upon this foundation, as Peter had just said, that Jesus is the Messiah, the son of the Living God, that is the foundation (the rock) upon which he would build his church. That's exactly what the Apostle Paul says in

1 Corinthians 3:11: "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ."



Matthew 20:26,27: "...but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."

Those that you lead should become healthier and stronger as a result of you serving them.

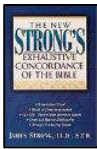
According to the Bible, Jesus is the only foundation - but who leads in his absence?

Now to the context of our theme text:

1 Peter 5:1-4: (NKJV) ¹The **elders** who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow **elder** and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: ²Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; ³nor as being lords over those

entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; ⁴and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away."

Peter himself verifies that Jesus is the foundation. He calls himself in the scripture above a "fellow elder," with the only difference is that he was able to witness the sufferings of Christ in person. Peter isn't "lording it over" that he is in greater authority than the others.



Elders: A Comprehensive position to oversee the flock of Jesus:

Elder: Strongs #4245, presbuteros (pres-boo'-ter-os); older, a senior; or Christian "presbyter"

Greek English lexicon - selected definitions: 1) elder, of age; 2) a term of rank or office 2a) among the Jews 2a1) members of the great council or Sanhedrin (because in early times the rulers of the people, judges, etc., were selected from elderly men) 2a2) of those who in separate cities managed public affairs and administered justice 2b) among the Christians, those who presided over the assemblies (or churches). The NT uses the term bishop, elders, and presbyters interchangeably

So this word has a general meaning, carrying the thought of "older," or "senior," but also a position of some authority. We will be looking in the book of Timothy for many scriptures because Timothy was an elder, albeit a young man.

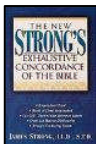
Some descriptive examples of elders:

1 Timothy 5:1: "Rebuke not an **elder** <4245>, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren;"

1 Timothy 5:17: "Let the **elders** <4245> that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine."

1 Timothy 5:19: "Against an **elder** <4245> receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses."

Another word for "elder:"



Elder: Strongs #1985 episkopos (ep-is'-kop-os); a superintendent, i.e. Christian officer in genitive case charge of a (or the) church (literally or figuratively)

1) an overseer 1a) a man charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly, any curator, guardian or superintendent 1b) the superintendent, elder, or overseer of a Christian church

1 Peter 2:25: "For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and **Bishop** <1985> of your souls."



Acts 20:28: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you **overseers <1985>**, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."



Observations on what Eldership is:

- A position to be looked up to: 1 Timothy 5:1
- A position of honor: 1 Timothy 5:17
- A position whose integrity must be treated with dignity: 1 Timothy 5:19
- A position that Jesus himself is described as having over our souls: 1 Peter 2:25
- A position with the great responsibility of feeding the flock: Acts 20:28

Where do we all fit in relation to Jesus Christ who is the only foundation for the Christian church? None of us, no human being, can take his place. No human being can make decisions as Christ did. No human being can sit in the seat of the same authority as Jesus Christ, because he is the only foundation. Everything else is built upon that foundation.

How do you build proper leadership to maintain that? It is difficult because human ego gets in the way very easily.

How does one become an elder? This again is a difficult question and again your perception is dependent upon your denominational background. Our perspective starts with looking at the decision process in early Christianity.

Paul and Barnabas on a Missionary Journey:

Acts 14:21-23: (KJV) ²¹And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, ²²Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. ²³And when they had **ordained <5500>** them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed."

Ordained: Strongs #5500 cheirotoneo (khi-rot-on-eh'-o); (to stretch); to be a hand-reacher or voter (by raising the hand), i.e. (generally) to select or appoint: ordain, choose 1) to vote by stretching out the hand 2) to create or appoint by vote: one to have charge of some office or duty 3) to elect, create, appoint

2 Corinthians 8:16-19: (NKJV) ¹⁶But thanks be to God who puts the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus. ¹⁷For he not only accepted the exhortation, but being more diligent, he went to you of his own accord. ¹⁸And we have sent with him the brother whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches, ¹⁹and not only that, but who was also **chosen <5500>** by the churches to travel with us with this gift, which is administered by us to the glory of the Lord Himself and to show your ready mind,"

(This "mystery" brother is never named; perhaps it was Luke, a very devout Christian.) This brother was chosen (ordained) by the churches, not by the Apostle Paul or by one person's authority. The multitude of individuals decided this brother would represent them.



The word "ordained," Strongs #5500, by definition and use reveals a voting environment, versus an "ordination" as we normally would think. Compare the following:

Ordain: Strongs #5087 tithemi (tith'-ay-mee); to place (in the widest application, literally and figuratively;) properly, in a passive or horizontal posture, lay, put, lay down, make, appoint, kneeldown

Lexicon: selected definitions 1) to set, put, place 1a) to place or lay 1b) to put down, lay down 2) to make 2a) to make (or set) for one's self or for one's use 3) to set, fix establish 3a) to set forth 3b) to establish, ordain

Some of the many uses:

Matthew 5:15: "Neither do men light a candle, and **put <5087>** it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house."

Matthew 12:18: "Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will **put <5087>** my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles."

Luke 20:43: "Till I **make <5087>** thine enemies thy footstool."

Hebrews 1:2: "Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath **appointed <5087>** heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;" (Jesus was ordained; leadership in the Christian church was voted upon.)

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."
- Martin Luther King Jr.

That is what is called upon from Christian leadership.

So in the early church, the becoming of an elder was a function of the church's decision - essentially the vote of those whom the elder would be shepherding and not a function of the decision of one individual.

2. What qualifies someone to be such a leader?

Back to the theme text:

1 Peter 5:1-4: (NKJV) *"¹The **elders** who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow **elder** and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: ²Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; ³nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; ⁴and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away."*

Peter considered himself a "fellow elder," even though he had great authority given to him.

Observations from Peter's exhortations:



- Serve not because you must, but out of a willing heart;
- Serve, not for money, but out of sheer eagerness; ("not for dishonest gain") Christianity was never meant to be a moneymaking prospect.
- Serve, not in a dominating way, but rather as a living example of Christ likeness. ("nor as being lords over those entrusted to you")



Jesus reprimanded the Scribes and Pharisees for lording their positions over the people.

Matthew 10:8: (NKJV) *"Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give."*

The following are two sets of scriptures that actually list qualifications for leaders:

1 Timothy 3:1-7: (KJV) *"¹This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. ²A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; ³Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; ⁴One 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?) ⁶Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. ⁷Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."*

Titus 1:5-9: (KJV) *"⁵For 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: ⁶If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. ⁷For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; ⁸But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; ⁹Holding 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."*

1 Timothy 3:1: (NKJV) *"This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work."*

(Source: "Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible", Robert Jamieson, A.R. Fausset and David Brown, 1871) Desire—literally, "stretch one's self forward to grasp"; "aim at:" a distinct Greek verb from that for "desireth." What one does voluntarily is more esteemed than what he does when asked (1 Corinthians 16:15). This is utterly distinct from ambitious desires after office in the Church. (James 3:1).

1 Timothy 3:2-7: (NKJV) A bishop then must be:

- **blameless, - not arrested, i.e. (by implication) inculpable**

This means living an honorable life both on the outside and the inside.

Philippians 2:15: (NKJV) *"that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,"*

- **the husband of one wife,**

This is ambiguous - this could mean only one wife at a time, only one wife in a lifetime; we believe it means living in a faithful covenant relationship with your one wife. This adds a dimension of reality to Christian leadership - leaders will come from regular people who come to Christianity. Are they living up to a covenant relationship to God through Jesus?

- **temperate, - sober, i.e. (fig.) circumspect**

This is standing up tall and firm for something bigger than you are; to have self-restraint.



1 Corinthians 9:25: (NKJV) "And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown."

There is a dramatic cost to leadership. Part of worthy leadership is being able to pay that cost on a constant basis, without complaint.

"What is to give light must endure the burning."
- Eleanor Roosevelt

- **sober-minded, - safe (sound) in mind, i.e. self-controlled (moderate as to opinion or passion)**

1 Peter 1:13: (NKJV) "Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;"

You are moderate in self and passionate in the grace.

- **of good behavior, - orderly, i.e. decorous:**

A good leader lives what Christianity ought to look like.

- **hospitable, - fond of guests**

This is a sense of community. The Christian community was a wide variety of peoples when this was written. There should be an open door to your physical home, but also an open heart to bring people in to encourage them and uplift them.

- **able to teach; - instructive**

2 Timothy 2:15: (NKJV) "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

The Apostle is telling Timothy that he needed to be diligent in understanding the Gospel, the prophecies, and biblical teachings as a whole in order to be an effective teacher. Leadership means having the ability to teach, which separates a lot of Christians.

- **not given to wine,**

Ephesians 5:18: (NKJV) "And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit."

Rather than filling yourself up with intoxicating drink, fill yourself up with the Holy Spirit. A Christian leader should have complete control over alcohol.

- **not violent, (physical and verbal towards others)**

Titus 3:2: (NKJV) "to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men."

- **not greedy for money,**

1 Timothy 6:6-10: (NKJV) "Now godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. ⁸And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. ⁹But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in

Christian leadership is built on contribution, service, humility, and the foundation of Christ only.



destruction and perdition. ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

"Stand with anybody that stands right, stand with him while he is right and part with him when he goes wrong." - Abraham Lincoln

Greed entered into Christianity even back then. Paul wanted Timothy to be aware of this problem.

- **but gentle,**

1 Thessalonians 5:14: (NKJV) "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all."

Gentle implies one isn't out for oneself.

- **not quarrelsome,**

2 Timothy 2:24: (NKJV) "And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient,"

Quarrels are when people speak *at* each other, not *with* each other.

- **not covetous;**

2 Peter 2:3: (NKJV) "By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber."

To covet is to want something that is not rightfully yours. Leaders may covet more authority, for example. Leaders have responsibility to guide and support; wanting more is walking a dangerous ground.

- **one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence;**

Do the children have to be believers? Young children aren't old enough to make such a decision, but as they are growing up they should have a sense of obedience. What if a leader has a rebellious teenager? It doesn't necessarily mean they are out of control. Children should show a sense of the Christianity for which the leader stands.

- **not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil.**

Leadership requires wisdom that comes from experience.

1 Timothy 4:12: (NKJV) "Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

Timothy was a classic example of someone who was young but not a novice. The Apostle Paul was telling him not to let anyone look down upon him for being young, but to be an example in all ways. The people would see he had spiritual wisdom.

1 Timothy 6:17-21: (NKJV) "¹⁷Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. ¹⁸Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, ¹⁹storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. ²⁰O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and





idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge- ²¹by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace be with you. Amen."

Stand firm on what is important. Knowledge is good but it is meaningless unless it is applied.

- **Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.**

Your life ought to reflect great integrity to those who are not Christians.

Matthew 5:14-16: (NKJV) ¹⁴"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

Be a light to the world. We can be an example of living a wholesome life of goodness, faith and humility.

Once more:

- Serve not because you must, but out of a willing heart;
- Serve, not for money, but out of sheer eagerness; ("not for dishonest gain") Christianity was never meant to be a moneymaking prospect.
- Serve, not in a dominating way, but rather as a living example of Christ likeness. ("nor as being lords over those entrusted to you")

1 Peter 5:5-11: (NKJV) ⁵Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." ⁶Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, ⁷casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. ⁸Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. ⁹Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. ¹⁰But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. ¹¹To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen."

Do we have this kind of leadership in our church?

**So what makes a Christian leader?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions,
Think about it...!**

