

# Sound

Sound could be defined as noise, but we are not interested in noise. It is also defined as "to be well, to be in good health" (Thayer). This type of sound is found five times in Paul's letter to Titus.

Elders are to "be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict" (Titus 1:9; cf. 1:13). By healthy, wholesome, gospel teaching, the bishops of a flock are to refute error and uphold truth. This can only be done if they themselves are diligent to study God's word and are well informed about error. Paul told the overseers at Ephesus to beware of "savage wolves" which would enter in among them, "not sparing the flock," even from among themselves (Acts 20:29-31). Elders must know sound doctrine in order to do this.

The preacher must "speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1). This includes directing teaching at various members of the local church: older men, older women, younger women, younger men and servants (2:2-10). This is done when the preacher will "Preach the word!" (2 Tim. 4:2). He must do this when people like it and when they don't. If the preacher is speaking sound doctrine, the church will not be sound.

The older men are exhorted to be "sound in faith" (Titus 2:2). It is important for the older men to be solid in truth, because it is from among those men that the elders are chosen. Also, whether serving as an elder or not, elder men exert an influence upon other members of the church, not to mention the community.

Titus is specifically told to have "sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of [him]" (Titus 2:8). It is sad, but true, preachers have opponents. These men may be found in the world, but they are also often found in the church. Paul knew firsthand what it was like to have to defend himself against unjust charges (Gal. 1-2; 2 Cor. 10:10-11). A preachers speech ought always to be sound; it will bring glory to the Lord and help protect him against his enemies.

Steven F. Deaton