

Pastoral Principle and Practise

BAM 411, MAM 411



MINTS®

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this course is for the students to grow in their knowledge of the Scriptural warrant for the Pastoral office and Ministry within the Church. Drawing from the whole of Scripture, but focusing on the teaching of the Apostle Paul the course aims to furnish the students with a comprehensive overview of the principles and practice of Pastoral Ministry.

COURSE CONTENT

The course is divided into eight lectures covering various aspects of the Pastoral Ministry from a portrait of a Pastor, to identifying elements and gifting for Call to Pastoral ministry, to the spiritual quality of a pastor's personal life, to the Priorities of Pastoral Ministry, to the Pastor's prayer life, to his preaching and Pastoral practice, concluding with a consideration of the difficulties and joys inherent in the Pastoral Office.

COURSE MATERIALS

The lecture notes are a full exposition for this course. The students are required to read them thoroughly along with the Scriptures. Students are also required to read John Stott's commentaries on 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy & Titus.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To study Pastoral Principles & Practice with other students;
- To acquire a detailed knowledge of Biblical teaching on the Office and Role of the Pastor;
- To develop a deeper understanding of God's work in this world;
- To grow in knowledge of how God deals with His church;
- To master the course in order to use it in preparation for preaching, teaching, and in pastoral ministry.

STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE

This course has been organized into eight consecutive lessons. Whilst the lectures can be read in any order with profit, they form a developing outline of Pastoral principles and Practice as they are compiled in the course.

COURSE EVALUATION

1. Student attendance (15%): One point will be given for each class hour attended.
2. Student homework (25%): Points will be given for completing the questions at the end of each lesson.
3. Student Readings (25%): Students will be given credit for completing the required reading.
4. Student Essay (25%): Students will prepare exegetical notes for a sermon/teaching.
5. Student Exam (10%): Students will complete an exam drawn from the questions at the end of each lesson.

BENEFITS OF THIS COURSE

The Pastoral Ministry in the Church of Jesus Christ arises out of the provision God has made for His church of men who are suitable called and equipped for the proclamation of His Word and the care of His people. By exploring the elements of Biblical teaching on the subject, the student is supplied with a comprehensive overview of essential elements for understanding the nature of the Pastoral Ministry. The contemporary church is faced with many pressures and voices seeking to influence the Pastoral Ministry. By focusing on the Biblical warrant, criteria, and pattern of the Pastoral ministry this course seeks to help shape the students thinking and pastoral practice in accordance with God's Word.

LECTURE ONE: A PORTRAIT OF THE PASTOR

PAUL'S PASTORAL CONCERN

Whilst as Christians we rightly emphasise Paul's preaching and missionary ministry, we also need to acknowledge and consider Paul's ministry as a Pastor. Paul's commitment to the preaching and missionary ministries necessitated an on-going commitment to those churches founded through those ministries. Therefore along with much instruction concerning the methodology and content of preaching, the apostle has much to teach concerning the role and ministry of a Pastor.

All of Paul's Epistles were written in response to the Pastoral needs of his readers. His on-going relationship with these churches brought the apostle great joy and also great burdens. Paul's approach to his readers when their behaviour evidenced a failure to appreciate the truth of the gospel was simply to explain the gospel to them again. One example of this is found in 2 Cor.5:16-21:

“From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God”.

From his Epistles we can see that Paul's aim in his ministry was to “*present everyone mature in Christ*”.¹ Paul's pastoral desire was to equip Christians to grow and stand on their own feet, not remaining spiritually immature, unhealthily dependent upon him or any other man, but stable in their life of discipleship to Jesus Christ.

In Ephesians 4 Paul's aim is given more detail. The measure of the maturity Paul aims to point believers to is that of Christ himself.” In this passage, however, Paul's aim is not simply concerning the individual, but rather the individual as part of the corporate whole. The individual grows within the context of the fellowship of believers to which he or she is united. Through the ministry of Pastors saints are equipped “*for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.*”² Concerning the goal of equipping the saints, Stott comments, “His teaching and training are directed to this end, to enable the people of God to be a servant people, ministering actively but humbly according to their gifts in a world of alienation and pain. Thus, instead of monopolizing all ministry himself, he actually multiplies ministries.”³ Concerning the goal of maturity, he writes, “*The one new man is to attain mature manhood, which will be nothing less than the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, the fullness which Christ himself possesses and bestows.*”⁴

¹ Colossians 1:28 ESV

² Ephesians 4v12-13 ESV

³ Stott, J. R. W. *God's new society: the message of Ephesians*, p. 167

⁴ *ibid* p. 170

Paul uses the metaphor of “building up” frequently in discussing ministry. For him it is a key element in biblical pastoral ministry. For Paul, this element of “building up” various components involving instruction in truth, fostering holiness, encouraging unity and inspiring faithfulness. For the apostle, teaching truth involved counselling in order that all the spiritual and ethical implications of the gospel may be clearly understood. At times this involved engaging in combatting and exposing various forms of false teaching and practices that led to an undermining of that goal of “building up” and a disunity, which in turn threatened the aim of corporate holiness.

GRACE, THE BASIS OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

Paul’s motivation Pastoral ministry was not simply his apostolic commission received from God, but also the profound sense of wonder and gratitude that God’s grace had been revealed to him, as he expresses to Timothy: *“I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus”*.⁵ Zugg comments, “Paul is thankful to God for the privilege of serving. He is an example for every Christian minister. Ministry is a calling, a gift of grace, and ministers must be thankful for the things entrusted to them. We cannot be ungrateful. If we are tired of ministry or if we have pride in our callings, we will soon be tempted to think that God should thank *us* for our spiritual service.”⁶

In his second letter to Timothy Paul uses the illustration of a soldier to tell us that his desire in Ministry to please the Lord was the determining factor in his conduct.⁷ This desire is explicitly expressed to the Corinthians, *“So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.”*⁸ This desire is expressed in the light of the prospect of standing before the judgment seat of Christ. Says Barnett, *“Just as a child seeks to please a kindly and encouraging teacher, so we seek to please the Lord in all we do. Hope for the future, therefore, should not encourage dreamy unpracticality in the present, but courage and purpose.”*⁹

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

It is in the Pastoral Epistles to Timothy and Titus that one discovers the apostle’s most systematic treatment of the subject of Pastoral ministry. In these letters written towards the end of his life, the apostle Paul is passing on the torch to the next generation of church leaders and in so doing provides both Timothy and Titus, and indeed the succeeding generations of the church of Jesus Christ, a clear summary of his thinking on the nature and word of pastoral ministry.

By the time Paul wrote the Pastoral Epistles, the churches he founded had become settled fellowships that had grown and developed and now faced problems that we recognise are familiar to those who are second-generation leaders. As pastors, Timothy and Titus faced opposition from those within the churches, they face the concern of some who were once enthusiastic converts but who are now leaving the church having renounced their faith¹⁰. Along with the problems, the threat of doctrinal error was

⁵ 1 Tim. 1:12-14

⁶ Zugg, 1 Timothy MINTS Course, p.20

⁷ 2 Tim. 2:4

⁸ 2 Corinthians 5:9 ESV

⁹ Barnett, P. *The message of 2 Corinthians: power in weakness* . p. 101

¹⁰ 2 Tim. 1:15

increasing and the element of spiritual conflict in the ministry is evidently much to the fore in Paul's teaching, as the apostle urges Timothy to fight for the faith.¹¹

Within these letters Paul's pastoral heart is conveyed to Timothy and to Titus in his use of concepts depicting familial relationship. He addresses Timothy as, "*my true child in the faith*" and Titus as "*my true child in a common faith*."¹² Paul has been instrumental in the spiritual birth of his younger helpers and conveys his felt sense of responsibility toward them in paternal language. As their spiritual father it is fitting that he should serve as a mentor and model for their development. It is the context of this relationship that Paul expresses his encouragements and charges. Paul is open to speak of his gentleness and patience in his pastoral work; a gentleness and patience that were shaped by his realization of how gentle and patient the Lord had been to him.¹³

THE PASTOR/TEACHER

One essential element to Paul's self-awareness of his ministry is that of being a teacher. Paul describes his ministry to Timothy in such terms: "*For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.*"¹⁴ Paul patiently taught so that his congregations would be rooted in faith and truth, and build up by it.¹⁵ Paul urges this aspect of ministry upon both Timothy and Titus. To Timothy he writes, "*Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching*" and "*preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching*". To Titus he wrote, "*in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned*".¹⁶ The ministry of men apt to teach is part of God's good gift to the church.¹⁷ The content of their instruction is to be found in the Scriptures,¹⁸ and in the traditions that stretch back to Jesus himself.¹⁹ Zugg comments, "The Greek word *didaskalia* includes the idea of instruction. It incorporates the explanation of biblical texts and communication of the great truths of Christian doctrine to the flock. Although its meaning involves the idea of private teaching, Paul's focus here is the public reading and preaching of God's Word . . . Timothy was to be centered on the Word. The great Old Testament example is Ezra (see Neh. 8:1-8). Timothy and all teachers must follow the same pattern. It is the most effective means because it is God's chosen means."²⁰

John Stott comments, "The Christian pastoral ministry is essentially a teaching ministry, which explains why candidates are required both to be orthodox in their own faith and to have an aptitude for teaching (*e.g.* Tit. 1:9; 1 Tim. 3:2)".²¹

A SPIRITUAL MINISTRY

The ministry of which Paul speaks in the Pastoral Epistles is a spiritually gifted ministry. On three occasions Paul reminds Timothy of the Spiritual gift he has received, that is to be the foundation and source of strength for his ministry. He reminds Timothy of the prophecies that were made concerning

¹¹ 1 Tim. 1:18; 2 Tim. 2:1-10

¹² 1 Tim. 1:2; Tit. 1:4

¹³ 1 Tim. 1:16

¹⁴ 1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11; 3:10

¹⁵ Zugg, p.35

¹⁶ 1 Tim. 4:13; 2 Tim. 4:2; Tit. 2:7

¹⁷ 1 Tim. 5:17; 2 Tim. 2:2

¹⁸ 1 Tim. 4:13; 2 Tim. 3:16; 4:2

¹⁹ 1 Tim. 6:13; 2 Tim. 2:2

²⁰ Zugg, p.72

²¹ J. R. W. Stott, p. 108.

him, the gift conveyed to him by prophecy when the counsel of elders laid hands on him, and the gift he had received when Paul laid hands on him.²² Indeed it is only by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit that Timothy would be enabled to guard the good deposit entrusted to him.²³ Pastoral ministry is a call of God; no man should enter into the office of a minister of his own accord. The Spirit works through both an internal call (the man's own desire) and an external call (one evident to the church). The elders affirmed the call by laying hands on him. Paul himself laid hands on Timothy (2 Tim. 1:6).²⁴

A GODLY MINISTRY

A second emphasis of Paul on the character of ministry outlined in the Pastoral Epistles is that it is to be a godly ministry. Twice he addresses Timothy as a "man of God".²⁵ Zugg comments, "Paul uses very personal terms. Timothy is a man of God, not a man of material desire. He uses this phrase to encourage Timothy. In the Old Testament it was used to describe the great leaders of Israel, e.g., Moses (Deut. 33:1; Jos. 14:6), David (Neh. 12:24), Samuel (1 Sam. 9:6), Elijah (1 Kings 17:24), and Elisha (2 Kings 4:7). The term describes one who represents God in His service, who speaks in His name. His use of that title was a great compliment and an encouragement for Timothy. God has called him into service, and he has been faithful in it."²⁶

Timothy's godliness was to be portrayed in the purity of his speech and life²⁷, in his diligent hard work²⁸, in his sensitive relations with others²⁹, in the avoidance of the temptations of ministry³⁰, and in his continued personal spiritual progress.³¹

Interestingly, Timothy's godliness was to be seen in how he handled those who were false teachers. He was, on the one hand, to stand resolutely for the non-negotiable truths of the gospel. Timothy was not to offer negotiations on what was the truth of the gospel, rather he was to "*Command and teach these things*" that were able to make people wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus and was "*profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work*"³². He was to avoid being distracted from this task by entering into discussions concerning futile questions³³. Yet, on the other hand, he was to stand firm with a kind of ruthless graciousness, handling his opponents with gentleness³⁴. The pattern of sound teaching was to be defended in a loving spirit.³⁵

AN ASSURED MINISTRY

Another essential element of ministry as portrayed by the apostle through the Pastoral Epistles, is that of an informed ministry. In contrast to the false teachers who did not know what they were talking about³⁶, Timothy had to be sure of what he believed and why he believed it in order to teach others,

²² 1 Tim. 1:18; 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6

²³ 2 Tim. 1:14

²⁴ Zugg, p.73

²⁵ 1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 3:17

²⁶ Zugg, p.103

²⁷ 1 Tim. 4:12, 2 Tim. 2:22

²⁸ 1 Tim. 4:15

²⁹ 1 Tim. 5:1-21

³⁰ 1 Tim. 6:3-10

³¹ 1 Tim. 4:15

³² 1 Tim. 4:11; 2 Tim. 3:14-16

³³ 1 Tim. 4:7; 6:3-5; 2 Tim. 2:16-18

³⁴ 1 Tim. 3:3; 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:24; 4:2

³⁵ 2 Tim. 1:13

³⁶ 1 Tim. 1:7

who would themselves pass on that teaching.³⁷ The principle part of ministry is to be that of teaching the truth and correcting error.³⁸

The apostle Paul uses various metaphors to describe the work of a pastor. The Pastor is pictured as a worker who must be concerned about the quality of his work³⁹, a farmer who works hard to produce his crops⁴⁰, a soldier who denies himself for the sake of the warfare he is engaged in⁴¹, and an athlete who for the sake of competing has learned self-discipline.⁴²

A SHARED MINISTRY

The nature of ministry within the Church is to be a shared ministry. The burden was not to fall completely on Timothy and Titus' shoulders.⁴³ The apostle teaches that the leadership of the local church is to be a plural leadership. Titus is left in Crete to put what remained "in order and appoint elders" (plural) in every town as the apostle directed.⁴⁴ Ministry within the church is a solemn task carried out before God⁴⁵, as such the standards set out in the Pastoral Epistles remain the standards for the church in every age.

The structure of church leadership consisting of Elders and Deacons was to be comprised of godly men who had shown themselves able to stand the tests of their family lives and social lives as well as their spiritual lives.⁴⁶ Exercising such a role in the church would render some liable to temptation and therefore Timothy is discouraged from appointing men who were not personally spiritually mature enough for the task.⁴⁷

THE BIBLICAL IDEAL OF PASTORAL MINISTRY

The biblical concept of biblical pastoral ministry did not originate with the apostle Paul. The concept of Shepherding runs through out the Old Testament. The ultimate ideal of shepherding expresses the relationship of Yahweh with His Covenant people. David could write, "*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.*"⁴⁸

The biblical imagery of the Lord as the shepherd of his people is abundant and rich throughout the Bible. It begins in Genesis where, as Jacob blessed his sons, he described the Lord as "the God who has been my shepherd all my life long to this day."⁴⁹ Here Jacob declares his faith that behind his turbulent and often stubborn life was a faithful, forbearing Shepherd who provided for him and guided him. It was his desire to see his children blessed by submitting to the covenant faithfulness of Yahweh. The Lord is the ultimate benefactor, defender, and guide for his sheep.

God established this covenantal relationship corporately with his people. It is appropriate, therefore, that God's covenant people are described in terms of his "sheep" and "flock." The psalmist cries out,

³⁷ 2 Tim. 2:2; 3:14-16

³⁸ 1 Tim. 4:6, 11, 13; Tit. 2:14; 1 Tim. 5:20, 2 Tim. 4:2

³⁹ 2 Tim. 2:15

⁴⁰ 2 Tim. 2:6

⁴¹ 2 Tim. 2:3-4

⁴² 2 Tim. 2:5

⁴³ 1 Tim. 3:1-13; 2 Tim. 2:2; Tit. 1:5-9

⁴⁴ Tit. 1:5

⁴⁵ 2 Tim. 4:1

⁴⁶ 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Tit. 1:5-9 ESV

⁴⁷ 1 Tim. 5:22 ESV

⁴⁸ Psalms 23:1 ESV

⁴⁹ Genesis 48:15 ESV

*“Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock.”*⁵⁰ The psalmist takes up this concept of the covenant people of God being pictured as a flock of sheep when he rejoices in the faithfulness of God to his covenant people, *“Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker! For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.”*⁵¹

The portrayal of the Lord as shepherd of his flock is often located in a redemptive context. There are frequent references, for example, that relate the redemption of the people from bondage in Egypt to the Lord as shepherd. *“You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron”*⁵² reflects on the goodness of God in delivering his people through the Red Sea. The Psalmist speaks of the journey through the wilderness in pastoral terms as well, *“Then he led out his people like sheep and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.”*⁵³ These descriptions not only commemorate his protective care from the Egyptians but lay the foundation for the climactic redemptive deliverance yet to come.

The Lord’s self-revelation as “shepherd” of his people portrays the all-inclusive care that he provides for his people. As Witmer states, “This is clearly seen in Psalm 23, where the Lord’s care for his people leads to the superlative expression of gratitude and praise from his people, “I shall not want.” Nothing is lacking in the care provided for the flock. Not only does he feed them, but he also leads them and protects them”.⁵⁴ If the Lord is the shepherd and the people are his flock, we should not be surprised that he uses shepherding imagery to refer to those he calls to lead and care for his flock. The care of the Lord for his people is to be reflected in those whom he calls to lead.

This is seen in how two of the preeminent leaders of God’s people in the Old Covenant, Moses and David, are portrayed. Both Moses and David were called from shepherding real flocks to shepherd the people of God.⁵⁵ Moses and David are both described as shepherds. In providing shepherding care for the people of God, they were reflecting the shepherding care of the covenant Lord.

Whilst in the lives and ministries of Moses and David we see much that would pattern the Pastoral ministry, we also see the limitations and weaknesses of humans as shepherds of God’s people. Both Moses and David fail in their calling on a personal level. Moses, instead of speaking to the rock as the Lord directs, strikes the rock in anger.⁵⁶ This act of disobedience and insolence led to Moses’ being barred from entering the land. David showed his weakness and failure when he abused his power as the shepherd-king of Israel in his act of adultery with Bathsheba and then in the ensuing plot to ensure the death of her husband, Uriah. As king, David should have been leading his army. Instead, he lingered in Jerusalem and abused the sheep.⁵⁷

Throughout the history of His dealings with Israel although the Lord called men to shepherd his flock, in the offices of Kings, Prophets and Priests, it became more and more apparent that the people needed to look to the Lord Himself as their true shepherd and king. In the Exile in Babylon, the prophet Ezekiel prophesied to the exiles. He detailed charges against the under-shepherds of Israel, the Lord held them accountable for their failure to shepherd the flock. Instead of feeding the people with the

⁵⁰ Psalms 80:1 ESV

⁵¹ Psalms 95:6-7 ESV

⁵² Psalms 77:20 ESV

⁵³ Psalms 78:52 ESV

⁵⁴ Witmer. P.13

⁵⁵ Exodus 3, 1 Samuel 16:11 ESV

⁵⁶ Numbers 20:10-13 ESV

⁵⁷ 2 Samuel 11

Word of God they fed themselves⁵⁸; they were careless of the weak, the sick, those who were injured, those who had strayed and those who were lost.⁵⁹ As a consequence the people were scattered, literally to a foreign land, and became food for the wild beasts.⁶⁰ The Lord states they had failed to accomplish the essential functions of shepherds: to feed, lead, and protect the sheep.

Having brought this indictment against the faulty Shepherds in Israel, Yahweh promises personal shepherding care for his people.⁶¹ He himself will search for the lost sheep, care for them, feed them, and protect them. He will lead them to rest, bind up the injured, and strengthen the sick. He also reiterates that he will hold those to account who have abused his flock.⁶²

The Lord declares that He will shepherd His people through the Shepherd of His own appointing, His servant David.⁶³ Obviously Ezekiel was prophesying long after King David was dead and buried. However, He is picking up on the Covenant the Lord established with David concerning his house⁶⁴ “The one who is to come will not merely be a king but a shepherd-king”⁶⁵.

This promise of a coming King to shepherd God’s people in fulfillment of the Lord’s promise to David is a note sounded throughout the prophets. In a passage in which the shepherds of Israel are denounced for their failure, Jeremiah proclaims, “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: ‘The Lord is our righteousness.’”⁶⁶ The “Righteous Branch” from the line of David will bring deliverance for the Lord’s people.

In his prophecy concerning the birth-place of the coming Messiah, the prophet Micah gives description of this coming Messiah in shepherding terms, “And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. And he shall be their peace”.⁶⁷

Jesus declared, “I am the good shepherd”.⁶⁸ Those who heard him would have understood the implications of what he was claiming through the matrix of those Old Testament images and promises. Jesus was declaring himself to be the Shepherd-King who spoken of by Ezekiel and Jeremiah. Throughout His ministry, Jesus used shepherding imagery to explain his relationship with those who believe in Him. “I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me.” The sheep belonging to the good shepherd are identified by their response to His voice: they follow Him. The need to follow is a theme emphasized by Jesus time again, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me”.⁶⁹

Throughout His Ministry Jesus showed His disciples that Shepherding was to be an essential

⁵⁸ Ezekiel 34:2 ESV

⁵⁹ Ezekiel 34:4 ESV

⁶⁰ Ezekiel 34:5

⁶¹ Ezekiel 34:11-12

⁶² Ezekiel 34:11-24

⁶³ Ezekiel 34:23-24

⁶⁴ 2 Samuel 7:12-16

⁶⁵ Witmer p.23

⁶⁶ Jeremiah 23:5-6 ESV

⁶⁷ Micah 5:4-5 ESV

⁶⁸ John 10:11, 14 ESV

⁶⁹ Matthew 16:24 ESV

characteristic of the church. In Matthew 9 Jesus sets the context for the sending out of the 12 in chapter 10, *“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”*⁷⁰ Having called and commissioned the 12 disciples, Jesus underlines the shepherding motive further by sending them *“to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”*⁷¹ The future ministry of the mission of the church is defined not only by the imagery of harvesting, but by the shepherding characteristic of the work. Jesus the Great Shepherd, sends his disciples as shepherds. As he told His disciples on the evening of His resurrection, *“As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”*⁷² Jesus would continue to shepherd His people through Spirit-filled under-shepherds whom He will call, equip and send.

As we will see in this course, the New Testament shows that the Pastor’s task as shepherd is at the very heart of his calling. Peter’s words to church leaders are instructive: *“So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.”*⁷³

In this statement of Peter’s we see elements of the office and work of the Pastor already seen in Paul. Peter considers himself a fellow elder indicating the plurality and parity of elders. He describes the work of the elder/pastor as one who shepherds the flock of God, and he describes Jesus as the “Chief Shepherd” indicating that pastor/elder shepherds derive their authority from Him.

THE AUTHORITY OF THE PASTOR.

The biblical case must be made that elders, as God’s shepherds, have authority, “the right to act” on behalf of the Good Shepherd. The authority of the Pastor/elder, as with all human authority, is derived. *“And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”*⁷⁴ Ultimately, all authority is the Lord’s. The Bible is clear that every human authority, whether in the church or in the State is delegated from the Lord above and that only God’s authority is underived.⁷⁵

The authority of the Pastor/elder is therefore a delegated authority. Paul reminded the Ephesian elders to *“Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.”*⁷⁶ As shepherds of the church, Pastors and Elders have been given the authority to lead and protect the local church. This authority comes from the Lord and is to exercised in His Name and on his behalf for the well-being of the flock bought with Jesus’ own blood.

With authority comes accountability. All who hold derived authority in the church are ultimately accountable to the Lord for their care for his flock. The writer to the Hebrews reminds his readers with the following imperative: *“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your*

⁷⁰ Matthew 9:36-38 ESV

⁷¹ Matthew 10:6 ESV

⁷² John 20:21 ESV

⁷³ 1 Peter 5:1-4 ESV

⁷⁴ Matthew 28:18 ESV

⁷⁵ Rom. 13:1, John 19:11 ESV

⁷⁶ Acts 20:28 ESV

souls, as those who will have to give an account.”⁷⁷ As we have seen above, this concept of accountability to the Lord for the exercising of the authority of the office of shepherd is not new inasmuch as the “shepherds” of Israel were held accountable for their failure to care for God’s flock.⁷⁸ The goal of this final accounting to the Lord should result in blessing to the under-shepherds of God so that “*when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.*”⁷⁹

The flock of God is called to both recognize and submit to this derived authority of its pastors/elders. It is the Holy Spirit who has made them overseers, and they have an authority delegated by the head of the church. This theme is made seen clearly in the New Testament. One of the characteristics of the Good Shepherd’s sheep is that they hear his voice and follow him. In turn, they are to follow those shepherd-elders called by him and given authority over various folds in the world. Paul encourages the Thessalonian believers to “*to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work.*”⁸⁰

The Christ-appointed leadership of His Church is intended for the advantage of all, not just for the advantage of those who hold positions of authority, and good and successful leadership is to a considerable degree dependent on the willing response of obedience and submission on the part of those who are under authority.

“Therefore”, says Witmer, “not only are the shepherds to know the sheep and take responsibility for them, but the sheep are to respect and appreciate, those who are over them in the Lord. This is the nature of the shepherd-sheep relationship with shepherds lovingly caring for the sheep and the sheep submitting to their loving leadership. This is the biblical framework within which leaders fulfill their responsibilities as shepherds”.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Hebrews 13:17 ESV

⁷⁸ Ezek. 34:10

⁷⁹ 1 Peter 5:4 ESV

⁸⁰ 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 ESV

⁸¹ Witmer, p.93

Lecture One Questions

1. What was Paul's pastoral desire in his Ministry?
2. Apart from the call of God, what were two motivations for Paul's ministry?
3. Why does Paul address Timothy as his "true child in the faith"?
4. What three elements does Paul remind Timothy of to underline the spiritual nature of Ministry?
5. In what 5 areas was Timothy's godliness to be portrayed?
6. In which two Old Testament leaders is the shepherding motif portrayed?
7. How does the Lord promise to shepherd His people through the prophet Ezekiel?
8. What formed the background to Jesus' declaration, "I am the good shepherd"?
9. How does Peter describe the work of the Elder/Pastor?
10. Where does the authority of the Pastor/Elder come from?

LECTURE TWO: THE CALL TO PASTORAL MINISTRY

DEFINITION OF “CALL”

The Christian ministry is not simply a career choice. It is the answering of a call directly from the living God. The ‘Call’ to Christian ministry is the unmistakable conviction that God places upon a man to perform a certain task. The particular task is to Shepherd His people and to care for their spiritual well-being, showing by personal example and the teaching of the Word of God, how they are to live their lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him.

It is often said to a man who expresses a sense of call to the ministry that if he can do anything else he should do so. There is good reason for this. Firstly, because a genuine call to ministry is all consuming: along with a clear sense of call is the recognition that nothing can be done but to respond to that call. Secondly, the ministry makes great demands upon the man and his family. Before entering into the ministry a man must count the cost for himself and his family.

The call of the minister to shepherd and teach the people of God His Word is of utmost importance to the Church of Jesus Christ because of its strategic importance for the spiritual well being of the Christ’s flock.

BIBLICAL BASIS FOR ‘CALL’

The roots of the Role and Call of Ministry are found in the Old Testament calling and ministry of the Prophets. The calling of the Old Testament prophets was an irresistible call from God, even though at many times it was a call they initially shrank from.

From Moses to Jeremiah, Prophets were overwhelmed with a sense of their own inadequacies for the task to be heralds of God’s word. In each case the decisive factor was the calling and gifting of God. From Exodus 3 we can sense something of the struggle Moses had with God’s call to send him “*to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.*”⁸² Moses expresses his sense of inadequacy,⁸³ incompetence,⁸⁴ and ineloquence⁸⁵ and is answered throughout with the Lord’s promise to be with him and to work through Him.

Amos in defending his integrity against the false charges of Amaziah gives an eloquent testimony to his experience of God’s call on his life, “*I was no prophet, nor a prophet's son, but I was a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore figs. But the Lord took me from following the flock, and the Lord said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to my people Israel.’*”⁸⁶ In his call to the office of prophet Jeremiah was told, “*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.*”⁸⁷ His fears and reticence were overcome with the promise of God’s presence and equipping.⁸⁸

From the gospels we see how each disciple received a specific call from the Lord Jesus to the ministry for which He was to prepare them.⁸⁹ This sense of personal call and specific ministry is underlined in

⁸² Exodus 3:10 ESV

⁸³ Exodus 3:11 ESV

⁸⁴ Exodus 4:1 ESV

⁸⁵ Exodus 4:10 ESV

⁸⁶ Amos 7:14-15 ESV

⁸⁷ Jeremiah 1:5 ESV

⁸⁸ Jeremiah 1:8 ESV

⁸⁹ Matthew 10:1-5, 28:18-20 ESV

the experience of the apostle Paul, who received his commission at his conversion, as he relates to Agrippa, “*And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles— to whom I am sending you to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me’*”.⁹⁰

It was this conviction of his calling that motivated Paul’s ministry, being conscious that he was “*called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus.*”⁹¹

SENSING A CALL

Whilst the sense of call comes to individuals through a variety of ways, it is essential to note that it is God who calls a man, by His Holy Spirit. “The call comes about through sensitivity to God’s dealings with us as we pray, through reading the Scriptures, and through listening to the preaching of God’s Word, and often it is reinforced as we discover how God’s call has come to others both at the present time and in the past.”⁹²

Paul tells Timothy, “*If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task*”.⁹³ Whilst we have to guard against presumption, the desire to serve in such a way may simply be an expression of obedience on behalf of those who are being called by our Lord Jesus. Importantly, the spiritual leaders in the church are to take the initiative in actively seeking the Lord’s leading in identifying individuals with necessary gifting for ministry.

Characteristic of a sense of call is a desire to encourage the spiritual welfare of others through the ministry of God’s Word. Along with evidence of concern for the spiritual needs of others, will be an acknowledgement of a need for preparation and a willingness to come under the authority of the church. Those who the Lord calls He equips. Paul has much to say in the Pastorals concerning the qualifications of those called to be shepherds of God’s people.

The role of the local church in identifying, training and recognising the calling of God is essential. It is not suffice for an individual alone to feel he may have been called to the ministry. It has become traditional to talk of a double call to the ministry. There is the inner call, and this is essential. But that inner call has to be recognised and confirmed by the church as it recognises the calling and gifts of the prospective candidate for the ministry. This outward call is pictured in the setting apart and sending of Paul and Barnabas for the Gentile mission by the Holy Spirit and the church gathered at Antioch (Acts 13:3-4).

Any man sensing a call of God ought to submit himself to the spiritual of his home church asking them to test his call. At times a man’s sense of call may be immediately confirmed by the Eldership of his church, on other occasions time may be required for any gifting to be tested in serving the local church. As opportunities are afforded and taken, others in the church will become aware of Pastoral and Teaching gifts and will contribute to the process of recognising the call. This testing of a call is essential or both the prospective candidate and for any future charge, and should not be bypassed.

⁹⁰ Acts 26:15-18 ESV

⁹¹ 1 Corinthians 1:1 ESV

⁹² Begg, Prime, *On being a Pastor: Understanding our calling and work*, Zondervan 2004, p.22

⁹³ 1 Timothy 3:1 ESV

Outward confirmation by the church of that inner sense of call is essential for the sake of both the man and the church. The wider church, and any church the man goes on to serve, can have confidence as to the gifting and calling of that individual if the wider church has examined and approved him. The man himself having received the approval of the wider church concerning his sense of call will have a ground of encouragement through the testing times of ministry in recalling the confirmation of his sense of leading by the wider Church. This was clearly the goal of Paul's reminding Timothy of the way in which God's call to Timothy had been confirmed.

In 1 Timothy 4:6-16, Paul reminds Timothy of how he should faithfully execute his duties, and in verse 14, he specifically warns Timothy about neglecting his spiritual gift. Paul had personal knowledge of Timothy's spiritual gift and the unique circumstances accompanying the reception of his gift. Paul was the human channel through whom God conveyed Timothy's spiritual gift (2 Tim. 1:6): "*Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you*" (1 Tim. 4:14).

Timothy was converted during Paul's first missionary journey (A.D. 49). Thus he was Paul's true child in the faith. At the beginning of the second missionary journey, Luke records that Timothy joined with Paul to assist him in his gospel mission (Acts 16:1-3). Three significant things happened to Timothy on that occasion.

First, Timothy and Paul learned of Timothy's unique commission in the gospel through a series of Spirit-given, prophetic utterances: "*This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience*" (1 Tim. 1:18; cf. Acts 16:6-10 for other supernatural utterances accompanying the second missionary journey). Timothy had been singled out by the prophetic word for a specific task, just as Paul and Barnabas had been singled out in Antioch (Acts 13:1-3).

Second, in complete accordance with the prophetic word, Paul placed his hands on Timothy in order to convey a gift, that is, a charisma or special endowment for service: "*For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands*" (2 Tim. 1:6). By the laying on of Paul's hands and the impartation of a spiritual gift through Paul's hands, Timothy was officially set aside to share as a helper in Paul's commission in the gospel. The laying on of hands did not make Timothy the minister or bishop of a church or body of churches. Most likely, Timothy was unmarried and totally devoted to spreading and guarding the gospel as Paul's special assistant (Acts 19:22). He was an evangelist (2 Tim. 4:5), a co-worker, and partner with Paul in the work of the gospel.

Third, and closely associated with the prophecies and the laying on of Paul's hands, was "*when the council of elders laid their hands on you.*" The significance of the elders' action differed from that of Paul's action. The laying on of the elders' hands, Scripture shows, was done in association with (Greek, meta) Paul's laying on of hands and the prophecies. If we assume the act was similar in significance to that recorded in Acts 13:1-3, then the laying on of the elders' hands was a public commissioning by which the church entrusted Timothy to God's care and to the work to which God had called him. By doing this, the elders identified themselves as partners with him and expressed full agreement with his special task.

The word "presbytery" is a transliteration of the Greek word presbyterion, the collective noun for elders (presbyteroi). By using the collective noun eldership, Paul stresses the elders' official role and the significance of their act: the official body of church elders laid hands upon Timothy, publicly

affirming his special commission in the gospel, a fact he was never to forget. The elders referred to in this account were the elders Paul and Barnabas appointed on their first missionary journey. The entire body of elders laid hands on Timothy. As community leaders, their function was to represent the church in the communication of its approval and fellowship. Whether these elders were from one local church or several, the text doesn't indicate.

If this sense of call is in doubt by either party, then it should not be proceeded with. The call may be uncertain because it is not really resent, or it may be that the time is not right. Only when the inner call can be confirmed by the outer call should the candidate be encouraged to go forward.

ESSENTIAL NATURE OF MINISTRY

This theme will be developed in greater detail later, but in thinking about the call it is essential to consider the appropriate attitude to that calling in terms of how we understand the nature of the office to which a man is called.

Paul described himself as 'a minister of Christ Jesus'⁹⁴. The Pastor or Minister is first and foremost a servant of Jesus Christ; one who seeks by God's grace to follow in the footsteps of Him who washed the feet of his disciples. Jesus Himself is the example par excellence of what it means to be a servant. He Himself stated that he had come as one who serves⁹⁵ and exemplified the attitude needed by his followers when he washed His disciples' feet. Those who serve Him, serve His Church.

The calling of Pastors/Ministers is unfolded and fulfilled in the purpose of equipping of the saints for the work of ministry to the encouragement of personal maturity in Christ for all His redeemed people.⁹⁶ The nature of the Ministry is summed up in the phrases "Pastor - Teacher". Shepherding and teaching are both essential elements of the nature of ministry. Shepherding shapes the teaching and teaching is the means of shepherding. To shepherd the flock necessitates an intimate knowledge of the sheep. Pastors are to be among the flock to encourage, comfort, warn, and discipline as may be appropriate in any given situation⁹⁷. It is by the Word of God that the shepherd feeds the flock, presented in a balanced and spiritual manner in order that the sheep be nourished and encouraged in their walk with Christ and the growth in spiritual maturity.

The apostle Paul uses a variety of terms to highlight aspects of the Minister's ministry in relation to those he seeks to shepherd. In 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12 He is to be like a father in encouraging his children to seek to aim at the best and highest, "For you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory." In verse 7 of that same passage, Paul speaks of his concern for the Thessalonian believers in terms of being "gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children". In verse 8 Paul testifies to his affection for them, when he says "we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us".

The Minister's calling involves being a watchman. The role of a watchman was to stand on the city walls and look, giving the warning at the first sight of impending danger.⁹⁸ This was Paul's charge to

⁹⁴ Romans 15:16; 1 Corinthians 3:5 ESV

⁹⁵ Luke 22:27 ESV

⁹⁶ Ephesians 4:12-13 ESV

⁹⁷ 1 Thessalonians 2:12 ESV

⁹⁸ Ezekiel 3:16; 33:2 ESV

the Ephesian Elders, “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.”⁹⁹ The warning was not just concerning danger from outside the church, but also from within.¹⁰⁰

THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR A PASTOR

The Apostle Paul outlines the qualities required of one called to Pastoral Ministry in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. These Qualifications are requirements for all who are called to the office of Elder in the Church of Jesus Christ. A Pastor is an Elder among Elders: One who is set apart for the ministry of the word.¹⁰¹ Whilst these qualifications refer to all called to the Office of Elder we will be applying them to the Calling of the Pastor.

In 1 Timothy 3 Paul sets the stage for his catalog of elder requirements with what he calls a “*trustworthy saying*.” In effect, it says that what is stated is indeed true and deserves constant repeating among the Lord’s people: “*The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task*”.¹⁰² “The true desire to serve and lead in Christ’s church is noble.”¹⁰³

The phrase, “*the office of overseer*,” represents one word in Greek (*ἐπισκοπῆς* episcopo), which can be literally rendered “overseership.” It represents the position and function of the church official called the overseer (*ἐπίσκοπος* episkopos) who is mentioned in verse 2. “It is sometimes translated ‘bishops’ in other translations. The word *presbyteroi* (‘elders’) and *episkopoi* (bishops) are interchangeable. In 1 Peter 5:1-2, Titus 1:5-7, and Acts 20:17, 28 the words for pastor, elder, and bishop are used interchangeably.”¹⁰⁴ The overseer of verse 2 is not someone different from the elders of 1 Timothy 5:17-25 who lead and teach the church. Throughout the Pastoral Epistles Paul clearly shows that “overseer” is used interchangeably for “elder” when he switches from the term “elders” to the term “overseer” within the Titus list of elder qualifications (Titus 1:5,7).

The singular form of the word “overseer” does not imply that there was only one overseer in the church at Ephesus. From what we have seen in Acts 20 we know that there was a plurality of Elders in Ephesus. In 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:7 Paul uses a generic singular, that is, the singular name representing an entire class or type when speaking about the overseers. Thus, the singular “overseer” stands for all overseers— all elders. The only occasions that Paul uses “overseer” in the singular are in his lists of qualifications for the office (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:7). In both cases, overseer is preceded by the singular construction “if any man” (1 Tim. 3:1; Titus 1:6). When he addresses the overseers directly, however, he uses the plural form because he is addressing a council of overseers, not a single overseer (Phil. 1:1; Acts 20:28). “Although there is some distinction between certain elder/bishops, those who are called to teach (1 Tim 5:17) and others who are called to rule, the difference lies in their function, not in their authority.”¹⁰⁵

Paul goes on to say that overseership is “a fine work.” “Fine” renders the Greek word *καλός* kalos , which here conveys the idea of “excellent,” “good,” “worthwhile,” or “noble.” Acts 20:28 explains why overseership is an excellent work: overseers shepherd God’s Church that He purchased with His own blood. To God, the Church is the most precious thing on earth. In the face of many problems and

⁹⁹ Acts 20:28 ESV

¹⁰⁰ Acts 20:29 ESV

¹⁰¹ 1 Timothy 5:17 ESV

¹⁰² 1 Timothy 3:1 ESV

¹⁰³ Zugg, p.45

¹⁰⁴ *ibid*, p.46

¹⁰⁵ *ibid*

labors, the greatest encouragement and incentive Pastor can have is to know that he performs an exceedingly excellent work— one that is worthy of the sacrifice of one’s life.

Since God declares the office of overseer to be an excellent work, it follows that an overseer must be a man of excellent Christian character. To assure that only men of good character assume the role of overseer, Paul provides the local church with public, observable qualifications to protect both the office and the church: *“Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God’s church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil”* (1 Tim. 3:2- 7).

The verbal construction *“must be”* indicates what is necessary, compulsory, or fitting. God wants us to know that a properly qualified elder is a non-negotiable requirement for the government of God’s household. God provides objective, observable qualifications to test the subjective desire of all who seek the office of overseer.

ABOVE REPROACH

Heading the list of qualifications stands the general, overarching, “all-embracing” qualification: “above reproach” (*ἀνεπίλημτος* *anepilēmtos*). To be above reproach means to be unblameable, free from any offensive or disgraceful blight of character or conduct, particularly as described in verses 2- 7. Since all God’s people are called to live holy and blameless lives (Phil. 2:15; 1 Thess. 5:23), since the world casts a critical eye at the Christian community (1 Peter 3:15,16), and since Christian leaders lead primarily by their example (1 Peter 5:3), an irreproachable life is indispensable to the Christian leader. “In his affairs no one should be able to bring a charge against him. He is blameless.”¹⁰⁶ Paul then begins to delineate concrete, observable qualities that define what it means to be irreproachable.

THE HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE

In both of Paul’s qualification lists, he places the qualification *“the husband of one wife”* immediately after *“above reproach.”* So the first and foremost area in which an elder must be above reproach is in his marital and sexual life. The phrase *“husband of one wife”* is made up of three words in Greek (*μᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα*, *mias gynaikos andra*). The phrase *“of one wife”* is placed first in an emphatic position to stress the idea of “one wife.” It modifies the noun “husband.” Thus we can translate the phrase in the following ways: “one-wife husband,” “one-woman man,” or “husband of one wife.”

There is broad disagreement, however, on the proper interpretation of this little phrase. We will consider four possibilities: Pastors must be married; Pastors must not be polygamists; Pastors may marry only once; Pastors must be maritally and sexually above reproach. It’s not uncommon to hear people say that an elder must be married because Scripture says he must be *“the husband of one wife.”* This, however, is not an accurate interpretation. If Paul requires Pastors to be married, he flatly contradicts what he teaches in 1 Corinthians 7 where he outlines the distinct advantages of singleness in serving the Lord and even encourages singleness for the purpose of more effective, undivided service (1 Cor. 7:32- 35; cf. Matt. 19:12). If a Pastor is required to be married, Paul should have qualified his statements about the advantage of singleness because singleness would disqualify an aspiring Pastor, elder or deacon.

¹⁰⁶ *ibid*, p.47

A number of biblical commentators believe that the phrase, “*the husband of one wife*,” means “married to one wife.” They say that Paul’s intent was to prohibit polygamy— having two or more wives at the same time— and conclude that elders must not be polygamists. This seems like a good interpretation on the surface, but the related phrase, “the wife of one man” (1 Tim. 5:9), makes this interpretation nearly impossible. So it is unlikely that the phrase, “*the husband of one wife*,” is intended primarily to address polygamy.

The phrase “*the husband of one wife*” is meant to be a positive statement that expresses faithful, monogamous marriage. Negatively, the phrase prohibits all deviation from faithful, monogamous marriage. Thus it would prohibit an elder from polygamy and/or any questionable sexual relationship. Positively, Scripture says the candidate for eldership should be a “one-woman man,” meaning he has an exclusive relationship with one woman. Such a man is above reproach in his sexual and marital life.

SOBER-MINDED

In Greek, the word (νηφάλιος *nēphalios*) can mean sobriety in the use of wine. Here, however, it is used to mean mental sobriety, denoting a balanced judgment. Negatively, it indicates the absence of any personal disorder that would distort a person’s judgment or conduct. Positively, it describes a person who is stable, circumspect, self-restrained, and clear-headed. It is necessary that Pastors, who face many serious problems, pressures, and decisions, be mentally and emotionally stable. Pastors who lack a balanced mental and emotional perspective can easily be snared by the devil or false teachers.

SELF-CONTROLLED

Similar to the word translated “sober-minded,” “Self-controlled” (σώφρων *sōphrōn*) stresses exercising good judgment, discretion, and common sense. To be Self-controlled is to be sound-minded, discreet, and sensible, able to keep an objective perspective in the face of problems and disagreements. Self-control is an essential quality of mind for a person who must exercise a great deal of practical discretion in handling people and their problems. Self-control tempers pride, authoritarianism, and self-justification.

RESPECTABLE

“Respectable” (κόσμιος *kosmios*) is associated with the phrase “self-control” (1 Tim. 2:9). A sensible-minded person will also be a well-behaved person. Although the word is used to describe properness in outward demeanor and dress in 1 Timothy 2:9, its usage here conveys the more general meaning of “‘orderly’... ‘well- behaved,’ or ‘virtuous’... that which causes a person to be regarded as ‘respectable’ by others.” A Pastor cannot expect people to follow him if he is not respectable.

HOSPITABLE:

It is also necessary for an elder to be hospitable (φιλόξενος *Philoxenos*). Hospitality is a concrete expression of Christian love and family life. It is an important biblical virtue: Paul exhorts the Christians at Rome to pursue hospitality (Rom. 12:13). Peter writes, “Be hospitable to one another without complaint” (1 Peter 4:9). The author of Hebrews bids his readers: “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it” (Heb. 13:2). These New Testament commands to practice hospitality are all found within the larger context of Christian love. Unfortunately, most Christians, and even some Christian leaders, are unaware that hospitality is a biblical requirement for pastoral leadership in the church.

Some may even argue against such a seemingly insignificant point being a requirement for church shepherds. Such thinking, however, shows an inadequate understanding of authentic Christian

community, agape love, and the Pastor's work. For a pastor to be inhospitable is a poor example of Christian love and care for others. The shepherd pastor is to give himself lovingly and sacrificially for the care of the flock. This cannot be done from a distance— with a smile and a handshake on Sunday morning or through a superficial visit. Giving oneself to the care of God's people means sharing one's life and home with others. An open home is a sign of an open heart and a loving, sacrificial, serving spirit. A lack of hospitality is a sure sign of selfish, lifeless, loveless Christianity.

Although the shepherd's ministry of hospitality may seem like a small thing, it has an enormous, lasting impact on people. In His mysterious ways, God works through the guest- host relationship to encourage and instruct His people. So we must never underestimate the power of hospitality in ministering to people's needs. Those who love hospitality love people and are concerned about them. If the local church's pastor and elders are inhospitable, the local church will also be inhospitable and indifferent toward the needs of others.

ABLE TO TEACH

According to Acts 20, the elders must shepherd the flock of God. A major part of shepherding the flock involves feeding it the Word of God. Therefore, elders, but especially pastors, must be "able to teach" (*διδασκτικός* didaktikos) in order to do their job. The ability to teach entails three basic elements: a knowledge of Scripture, the readiness to teach, and the ability to communicate. This doesn't mean that pastor must be an eloquent orator, a dynamic lecturer, or a highly gifted teacher (of which there are very few). But a pastor must know the Bible and be able to instruct others from it. In his parallel list of elder qualifications in Titus, Paul expands on the meaning of "able to teach." He writes, "*He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it*" (Titus 1:9). A Pastor, then, must be able to open his Bible and exhort and encourage others from it. He must also be able to discern false doctrine and refute it with Scripture. God's Word brings growth to the church and protects it from falsehood. Therefore, pastors must be able to teach God's Word.

NOT A DRUNKARD

An elder must be above reproach in his use of alcohol. Paul uses strong language here that means not preoccupied or overindulgent with wine (*πάροινος* paroinos). Drunkenness is sin, and persistently drunken people require church discipline (see 1 Cor. 5:11; 6:9,10; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:18; 1 Peter 4:3). So a person in a position of trust and authority over other people can't have a drinking problem. The Bible contains many warnings against the potential dangers of wine and strong drink (Isa. 5:11,22; Prov. 20:1; 23:30- 35; Hos. 4:11). Drunkenness has ruined countless lives. Alcoholism reduces life expectancy, breaks up families, and destroys people financially. It's a moral and spiritual problem of the greatest magnitude. Pastors work with people, often those who are troubled. If a Pastor has a drinking problem, he will lead people astray and bring reproach upon the church. His overindulgence will interfere with spiritual growth and service, and it may well lead to more degrading sins. Note, however, that Paul is not presenting an absolute prohibition against drinking wine. He is prohibiting the abuse of wine (or any other substance) that would damage a man's testimony and work for God.

NOT VIOLENT

A violent man is a fighter, a bad-tempered, irritable, out-of-control individual. The Greek word (*πλήκτης* plektes) is derived from the verb "to strike" and suggests a violent person who is prone to physical assault on others. Wives and children especially feel the blows of a violent man, and anyone who seriously frustrates a violent man is a potential target for verbal, even physical, assault. Pastors must handle highly emotional interpersonal conflicts and deeply felt doctrinal disagreements between believers. Pastors are often at the center of very tense situations, so a bad-tempered, violent person is

not going to solve issues and problems. He will, in fact, create worse explosions. Because a violent man will treat the sheep roughly and even hurt them, he cannot be one of Christ's undershepherds.

GENTLE

"Gentle" (*ἐπιεικής* epieikes) is one of the most attractive and needed virtues required of a Pastor. The gentle man stands in vivid contrast to the violent man. A gentle man exhibits a willingness to yield and patiently makes allowances for the weakness and ignorance of the fallen human condition. One who is gentle refuses to retaliate in kind for wrongs done by others and does not insist upon the letter of the law or his personal rights. Gentleness characterized the life of Jesus on earth: "*Now I Paul myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ*" (2 Cor. 10:1). God fully expects His undershepherds to shepherd His people in the same way He does. Thus the shepherd must be patient, gracious, and understanding with the erring— and at times, exasperating— sheep like Christ.

NOT QUARRELSOME

Along with being gentle, it is important that a Pastor not be quarrelsome (*ἄμαχος* amaxos). Here the negative emphasizes the opposite positive the Pastor must be peaceable man. As Paul writes, "*And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness*" (2 Tim. 2:24-25).

NOT A LOVER OF MONEY

A Pastor must not love money or be greedy. So this qualification forbids a mercenary interest that uses Christian ministry and people for personal profit. False teachers, Paul points out, are overly interested in money and in personal financial gain (1 Tim. 6:5; Titus 1:11). The chief religious leaders of Jesus' day turned the temple into a merchandise mart for their own profit (Mark 11:15- 17). Like a powerful drug, the love of money can delude the judgment of even the best men. Scripture sternly warns against the love of money: "*For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs*" (1 Tim. 6:10). Pastors, then, cannot be the kind of men who are always interested in money. They cannot be men who need to control the church's funds and who refuse financial accountability. Such men have distorted spiritual values and set the wrong example for the church. They will inevitably fall into unethical financial dealings that will publicly disgrace the Lord's name. In stark contrast, a pastor should be content with God's provision. Paul states the matter this way: "*for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction*" (1 Tim. 6:7- 9).

HE MUST MANAGE HIS OWN HOUSEHOLD WELL

A prospective elder must be able to manage (*προϊστημι* prohistēmi : lead and care for; see 1 Thess. 5:12) his household "well." The key measurement when evaluating a man's management of his household is his children's behavior. So Paul requires that he keep "*with all dignity keeping his children submissive.*" This means he must be a responsible Christian father, husband, and household manager. He must have a reputation for providing for his family, financially, emotionally, and spiritually. A well-managed family means that the children obey and submit to the father's leadership. The way in which that relationship is manifested is especially important: it is to be "*with all dignity.*" The father is not to be a spirit-crushing tyrant who gains submission by harsh punishment. Elsewhere Paul writes, "*Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord*" (Eph. 6:4).

In Titus 1:6 Paul uses the phrase τέκνα ἔχων πιστά which has been translated either as "*his children are*

believers” or “*having faithful children*” The Greek word for “believe” is πιστός pistos, which can be translated either actively as “believing” (1 Tim. 6:2) or passively as “faithful,” “trustworthy,” or “dutiful” (2 Tim. 2:2). The contrast made is not between believing and unbelieving children, but between obedient, respectful children and lawless, uncontrolled children. The strong terms “debauchery or insubordination” stress the children’s behavior, not their eternal state. A faithful child is obedient and submissive to the father. The concept is similar to that of the “faithful servant” who is considered to be faithful because he or she obeys the Master and does what the Master says (Matt. 24:45- 51).

Since 1 Timothy 3:4 is the clearer passage, it should be allowed to help interpret the ambiguity of Titus 1:6. “*Under control with all dignity*” is closely parallel with “*having trustworthy children.*” In the Titus passage, however, the qualification is stated in a positive form— the elder must have children who are trustworthy and dutiful. Those who interpret this qualification to mean that an elder must have believing, Christian children place an impossible burden upon a father. Even the best Christian fathers cannot guarantee that their children will believe. Salvation is a supernatural act of God. God, not good parents (although they are certainly used of God), ultimately brings salvation (John 1:12,13). In striking contrast to faithful children are those who are accused of debauchery or insubordination. Wild, insubordinate children are a terrible reflection on the home, particularly on the father’s ability to guide and care for others. A man who aspires to eldership but has profligate children is not a viable candidate for church leadership.

Thus a Christian father must control his children in an honorable, respectful, and dignified way. Of course there are no perfect, problem-free children in this world. Even the best Christian fathers and mothers have child-rearing problems, but these parents resolve the problems and are involved with their children in responsible, caring ways. They guide their children through the many storms of life.

We must note that the children referred to in verse 4 are children who live at home, under their father’s authority: “*keeping [present tense] his children under control with all dignity.*” The critical importance of this requirement is immediately underscored by the rhetorical question Paul asks in verse 5: “*But if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?*” The answer to that question is a resounding negative— he can’t care for the church of God if he doesn’t know how to manage his own household. The Greek word rendered “care for” (ἐπιμελήσεται epimelēsetai) stresses the loving, personal attention of meeting the church’s various needs. It doesn’t, however, eliminate the idea of leading or directing, which is an essential part of caring for the church.

NOT A RECENT CONVERT

Scripture prohibits a “recent convert” from serving as Pastor or as an elder. A recent convert (νεόφυτος neophytos) is a beginner in the faith, a baby Christian, a recent convert. No matter how spiritual, zealous, knowledgeable, or talented a new convert may be, he is not spiritually mature. Maturity requires time and experience for which there is no substitute, so a new convert is simply not ready for the arduous task of shepherding God’s flock.

There is nothing wrong with being “*a new convert.*” All Christians begin life in Christ as babies and grow to maturity. A Pastor, however, must be mature and know his own heart. A new Christian does not know his own heart or understand the craftiness of the enemy, so he is vulnerable to pride— the most subtle of all temptations and most destructive of all sins. For a recent convert, the temptation of pride would be too great. Pride would destroy the man, causing personal disgrace, loss, exposure, divine chastisement, and possibly wrecking his faith. It would also hurt the church. So Paul warns against appointing a new convert as a Pastor, “*or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil.*”

HE MUST BE WELL THOUGHT OF BY OUTSIDERS

Finally, and of significant importance, a Pastor “*he must be well thought of by outsiders.*” Both the apostles Paul and Peter express deep concern that Christians have a good reputation before a watching, nonbelieving world (1 Cor. 10:32; Phil. 2:15; Col. 4:5,6; 1 Thess. 4:11,12; 1 Tim. 2:1,2; 5:14; 6:1; Titus 2:5,8,10; 3:1- 2; 1 Peter 2:12,15; 3:1,16). If all believers are required to have a good testimony before non-Christians, then it is imperative that the leaders have a good reputation with unbelievers. The church’s evangelistic credibility and witness is tied to the moral reputation of its leaders. That is why Paul emphatically states “he must be well thought of.” The verb “must,” the same verb used in verse 2, again stresses the absolute necessity and importance of this matter. The reason for emphatically insisting on this qualification is that an elder with an unfavorable or sinful reputation among non-Christians will “*fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil*” in a far more destructive way than those he leads.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A GENUINE CALL

Those genuinely called to be Ministers recognise that their gifting is to be used in the service of Christ and His people, not for selfish reasons, and will desire to faithfully use that gifting to administer Gods grace to His people through the ordinary Means of Grace.¹⁰⁷ When speaking those genuinely called will do so as one uttering the very words of God¹⁰⁸, desiring to show himself as one approved of God, rightly dividing the word of God and not disseminating his own opinions

¹⁰⁷ 1 Peter 4:10-11 ESV

¹⁰⁸ *ibid*

Lecture Two Questions

1. Where do we find the roots for the Role and Call of Ministry?
2. What is the role of the Church in the call to Pastoral Ministry?
3. Why is such confirmation essential for the church and the candidate?
4. What is the nature of the Pastoral Ministry?
5. How does the Pastor feed the flock?
6. Why is the work of the “overseer” an excellent work?
7. What does the phrase “*husband of one wife*” mean?
8. From Titus 1:9, what does being “*able to teach*” involve?
9. What does it mean for a Pastor manage his own household well?
10. What is the characteristic of a genuine call?

LECTURE THREE: THE PASTOR'S GODLINESS

Robert Murray M'Cheyne commented on the Minister's personal life in this way, "my people's greatest need is my personal holiness." Or again, he said, "How awful a weapon in the hand of God is a holy minister."

THE MINISTER AS AN EXAMPLE

The personal piety of one called to ministry is essential. It is essential because those called to the office of Pastor/Elder are God's stewards.¹⁰⁹ Those over whom they are placed are God's sheep. This was emphasised to Peter when he was restored by the Lord Jesus following the resurrection and given the charge to "*Feed my sheep.*"¹¹⁰ The church is more than a collection of people who are to be cared for. Paul charges the Ephesian elders "*to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.*"¹¹¹ Those called of God into ministry are to be examples to the people of God. Paul writing to the Thessalonians calls them to imitate him.¹¹² They were to obey his instruction and follow his example. Green writes, "Both the apostolic teaching and the example presented to the believers taught them how to conduct themselves, and so the example itself becomes authoritative."¹¹³ As such the New Testament places great stress upon the character of those God calls into position of leadership in the church. The qualifications for 'overseers' in the church are found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 & Titus 1:6-9, where the emphasis is upon Christian character.

Those called to office in the church of Jesus Christ bear common Christian character traits that ought to be true of all Christian men. Even the requirement that an Elder must be apt to teach¹¹⁴ should be true in some measure of all men who are husbands and fathers. The character of the office bearer is to underline and not undermine his teaching.

The aspect of being an example is exemplified in the life of Jesus. In calling his disciples Jesus' purpose was that alongside His unique teaching, they would observe His example. This purpose is clearly expressed in the upper room when Jesus, having washed his disciples' feet, asked them, "*Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.*"¹¹⁵

Jesus is the pattern for ministry par excellence. The undershepherd is to learn from and imitate the Great Shepherd. In writing to the Philippians, the apostle calls them *in humility to count others more significant than themselves*, "*Let each of you,*" he says, "*look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others*". The template they have for this is Christ, "*Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.*" He is the perfect example of humility and looking to the interest of others before himself.¹¹⁶ O'Brien comments, "the Christ-hymn presents Jesus as the ultimate model for Christian behaviour and action, the supreme example of the humble, self-sacrificing, self-giving service

¹⁰⁹ Titus 1:7 ESV

¹¹⁰ John 21:15-17 ESV

¹¹¹ Acts 20:28 ESV

¹¹² 2 Thessalonians 3:7 ESV

¹¹³ Green, G. L. *The letters to the Thessalonians* p. 346.

¹¹⁴ 1 Timothy 3:2 ESV

¹¹⁵ John 13:12-17 ESV

¹¹⁶ Philippians 2:1-11

that Paul has just been urging the Philippians to practice in their relations one toward another (vv. 1–4).”¹¹⁷

In calling the Roman believers to “*live in such harmony with one another*” Paul tells them that this is “*in accord with Christ Jesus*”; that is, in accordance with the example that is set by Christ in His ministry.¹¹⁸ In v7 of the same chapter Paul urges the Romans, “*welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you*”. The hospitality and openness of the Christian, let alone the Pastor, to receive or welcome others is modelled by the manner in which Christ graciously received them.¹¹⁹

In encouraging the believers in Corinth to give generously to the support of the wider church, Paul points again to Jesus as the example par excellence of sacrificial giving: “*For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.*”¹²⁰ To the Christians scattered abroad beginning to suffer for their faith, the apostle Peter points to Jesus as the example set for them for how they should behave when suffering for doing good: “*For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.*”¹²¹ Finally, the apostle Paul sets forth Jesus as the epitome of what a life of love looks like in Ephesians 5:2, “*walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us*”.¹²²

A fundamental truth of Christian discipleship is that all believers are called to follow the example of Jesus. However those who are called into leadership have a particular responsibility to do so. Paul could write to the Philippians, “*What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.*”¹²³ Along with the excellent things they had heard from Paul, the readers had also seen in him a godly example to follow. The apostle recognised his responsibility as a leader in the church to provide a clear example in his personal life for fellow believers of what it means to follow Christ.

Because of the obvious effect their example will have upon a congregation of Believers, Paul warns Timothy that an Elder “*must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil*”,¹²⁴ and therefore not to be “*hasty in the laying on of hands.*”¹²⁵ The qualifications for the office of Pastor/Elder must be examined and confirmed before the appointing of a man to office. Great harm is done to the church when men are given leadership responsibilities before the right time. It is the apostle Peter who clearly expresses this responsibility when he calls the fellow elders to be “*examples to the flock*”.¹²⁶ Clowney comments, “*Far from being a lord and master, the elder is to be an example. That is, he is to lead others in humble obedience to God by being himself humbly obedient to God.*”¹²⁷ And Helm writes. “*Those men who exercise the office of elder must always remember that the misuse of their power only impairs the church. Instead elders ought to go beyond the call of duty in proving themselves as examples to the flock. We are to emulate Jesus, who*

¹¹⁷ O’Brien, P. T. *The Epistle to the Philippians: a commentary on the Greek text*, p. 205.

¹¹⁸ Romans 15:2-3

¹¹⁹ Romans 15:7

¹²⁰ 2 Corinthians 8:9

¹²¹ 1 Peter 2:21

¹²² Ephesians 5:2

¹²³ Philippians 4:9 ESV

¹²⁴ 1 Timothy 3:6 ESV

¹²⁵ 1 Timothy 5:22 ESV

¹²⁶ 1 Peter 5:3 ESV

¹²⁷ Clowney, E. P. *The message of 1 Peter: the way of the cross* p. 202.

came to serve and not to be served (see Mark 10:45). Humility and sacrificial service are the hallmarks of godly leadership.”¹²⁸

FIVE AREAS OF EXAMPLE

Paul urged Timothy, “*Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.*”¹²⁹ Timothy was to encourage respect through his godly example.¹³⁰ Here Paul sets out five areas in which Elders are to be an example to God’s people.

SPEECH

Those who are called of God into ministry will have to speak. In teaching privately and publicly Elders use their tongues. Timothy was to be an example in his self-control over his tongue.¹³¹ Those called to office in the church must be moderate and restrained in their speech, gentle and not quarrelsome¹³². A man in leadership should be self-controlled, not arrogant or quick-tempered.¹³³ Rather, a minister should strive to be thoughtful and careful, especially understanding that our speech can be capable of being misunderstood.

A Pastor’s speech is to be exemplary, properly seasoned with grace. This charge has a positive and negative aspect. Positively his speech needed to present truth, edification, admonition, tenderness, forgiveness, and thanksgiving to God. Negatively, his speech should not contain falsehood, anger, bitterness, slander, malice, abusive speech, or filthy talk.¹³⁴ Again, Jesus is our preeminent example. In speaking of Jesus’ ministry, Matthew quotes Isaiah 42:1-3, “*He will not quarrel or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets; a bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not quench*”.¹³⁵

All Christians should guard their speech, for out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.¹³⁶ What we say, and how we say it, reveals what we are inwardly. If Pastors are to say the right things in the right way, we must think the right things in the right way. As Prime & Begg state, “When our tongues let us down, it is because we have not first watched over our hearts and thoughts.”¹³⁷

CONDUCT

Writing to Titus, Paul gives instruction that those called of God to office in the church are to have a conduct or way of life that is to be marked by being “*a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined*”.¹³⁸ Knight comments, “Paul has sketched out with these few well-chosen words the characteristics that must mark an “overseer”: He must love people and equally love virtue. He must be wise and prudent, must live in accordance with God’s law, must be devoted to God and seek to please him, and must manifest genuine self-control. With this blend of characteristics, the Christian leader is

¹²⁸ Helm, D. R. *1 & 2 Peter and Jude: sharing christ’s sufferings*, p. 163

¹²⁹ 1 Timothy 4:12 ESV

¹³⁰ Zugg, p.71

¹³¹ *ibid*

¹³² 1 Timothy 3:3

¹³³ 1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7

¹³⁴ Zugg, p.71

¹³⁵ Matthew 12:19-20 ESV

¹³⁶ Matthew 12:34

¹³⁷ Prime & Begg, p.40

¹³⁸ Titus 1:8

equipped by God's grace to exercise the kind of oversight that a steward in God's house, the church, should exercise."¹³⁹

Again, all Christians are to aspire to holiness. Every Christian is set apart for and to God, and are to be holy for He is holy. The grace of God revealed in the gospel trains all believers to "*renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age*".¹⁴⁰ The conduct of those called to be Pastors in the church ought to reflect this goal of pursuing Christlikeness. Others in the congregation and outside ought to be able to see that their lives are characterised by self-control, uprightness, and godliness and above reproach in that no charge can be made against them. Pastors are to be 'lovers of good'. In every area of life Church officers are to be an example of recognising and utilizing God's good gifts. Jesus said, "*Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*".¹⁴¹ Paul calls the Colossians to "*seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God*".¹⁴² If the heart/mind of the Pastor/Elder is set on things above, this will be evident in his life.

Within the qualifications for Pastor/Elder we have seen that Paul lays emphasis on the home life being managed in an exemplary fashion and children being obedient and faithful, submissive, showing proper respect so that they are "*not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination*"¹⁴³. The importance of this is underlined when Paul asks the question of every potential leader in the church, "*for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?*"¹⁴⁴ Godliness in the home is essential to the example that Elders are to set. Conduct in the home and in the church are not separate. Paul's logic moves from the lesser to the greater: one who does not know how to manage his own house cannot handle the greater responsibility of managing the house of God.

LOVE

The third quality that is to characterise those called of God for office in the Church is Love. Apart from being the first fruit of the Spirit,¹⁴⁵ it is the basic virtue from which all others flow. "*Love is the key. Joy is love singing. Peace is love resting. Long-suffering is love enduring. Kindness is love's touch. Goodness is love's character. Faithfulness is love's habit. Gentleness is love's self-forgetfulness. Self-control is love holding the reins*".¹⁴⁶

A Christian shows love by following the example of Jesus, who gave Himself for His people in love.¹⁴⁷ The Pastor is to set the example for love, by loving all people and especially those of the household of faith. It is seen in the qualifications for eldership in the desire to serve others in humility. Pastors are to be lovers of God and lovers of people, a love that is expressed in showing hospitality to folk.¹⁴⁸ The Greek word for "hospitality" (φιλόξενοϛ philoxenos) means 'a love of strangers' which implies a love for all and a willingness to open one's home to others.¹⁴⁹

¹³⁹ Knight, G. W. (1992). *The Pastoral Epistles: a commentary on the Greek text*, p. 293.

¹⁴⁰ Titus 2:12 ESV

¹⁴¹ Matthew 6:21 ESV

¹⁴² Colossians 3:1-3 ESV

¹⁴³ 1 Timothy 3:4; Titus 1:6 ESV

¹⁴⁴ 1 Timothy 3:5 ESV

¹⁴⁵ Galatians 5v22 ESV

¹⁴⁶ Hughes, R. K. (1990). *Ephesians: the mystery of the body of Christ* (p. 116). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

¹⁴⁷ Zugg, p.71

¹⁴⁸ 1 Timothy 3:2 ESV

¹⁴⁹ Zugg, p.49

Pastor/Elders are to set an example of loving others. This can prove extremely challenging when it comes to loving those who are difficult. In his letter to the Ephesians Paul draws our attention to our need to bear with one another in love, to speak the truth to in love, and to encourage and build up the body in love.¹⁵⁰ The goal of the Pastor, through the ministry entrusted to him by the Lord, is to strive for a church that is “a truly caring community marked by humility, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance and love. Paul’s primary concern is not for structures; he begins and ends with love.”¹⁵¹

FAITH

The Pastor/Elder is to be an example of faith to the flock, that their faith may be encouraged. Paul called upon Timothy to wage the good warfare “holding faith and a good conscience”.¹⁵² Faith in Jesus Christ produces good works. Pastors are called to be an example to the church.¹⁵³

In explaining the qualifications of Pastor/Elder to Titus Paul writes, “*He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught*”¹⁵⁴ Campbell writes, “It is the job of the elders, says Paul, (whether they are full-time in the work or not) to encourage believers with sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. Unreserved commitment to foundational doctrine is the non-negotiable prerequisite for such a vital ministry.”¹⁵⁵ Ministers who have strong faith and confidence in God are an example to the flock.¹⁵⁶ As Pastor/Elders are called to be “apt to teach”, they must continually building upon the foundations of their faith, growing in knowledge and understanding of the Truth that they may rightly handle the word of truth in their preaching, teaching and counselling.

Paul urges Timothy, “*Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.*”¹⁵⁷ Williams explains, “In ministry, the difference between the good and bad workman is that the former wants the approval of God upon his work, whereas the latter wants the approval of men. Timothy will have God’s approval and blessing on his preaching and teaching if he ‘correctly handles the word of truth’ and has no ‘need to be ashamed’ of his ministry.”¹⁵⁸ In this way he may “*be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.*”¹⁵⁹

The Pastor/Elder is to be an example to the flock not only in the knowledge of the faith, but also in the exercising of faith. The word for faith points to the exercising of faith. BDAG gives the definition, “*the state of being someone in whom confidence can be placed, faithfulness, reliability, fidelity, and commitment*”. So Paul can be encouraging Timothy to be such an example of faith that people will have confidence in him as a man of God, to follow his lead in his ministry. Prime & Begg comment, “In that way (Pastors) serve God’s people by stirring and feeding their faith through example, sometimes almost unconsciously, since we cannot measure the degree to which (their) exhibition of faith encourages it in others.”¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁰ Ephesians 4:2, 15, 16 ESV

¹⁵¹ Stott, J. R. W. *God’s new society: the message of Ephesians* p. 173.

¹⁵² 1 Timothy 1:19 ESV

¹⁵³ 1 Timothy 4:12 ESV

¹⁵⁴ Titus 1:9 ESV

¹⁵⁵ Campbell, D. *Opening up Titus*, p. 32

¹⁵⁶ Zugg, p.71

¹⁵⁷ 2 Timothy 2:15 ESV

¹⁵⁸ Williams, P. *Opening up 2 Timothy* p. 57.

¹⁵⁹ Titus 1:9 ESV

¹⁶⁰ Prime & Begg, p.44

PURITY

As the Pastor/Elders is to be “above reproach”¹⁶¹, moral purity is to be of the essence of his example to the church. Moral perfection is not what is pictured; otherwise no descendant of Adam would ever qualify for a share in the oversight of the church. No Pastor/Elder reaches a state of perfection this side of glory, but he must be an example of one who “*purifies himself, even as He is pure.*”¹⁶² Paul urges Timothy, “*set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.*” The word translated “purity” (*hagneia*) “can describe general moral conduct with a special emphasis on sexual behaviour. In all things a believer is to be pure, to actively seek holiness. Christian leadership demands godly character from beginning to end. A pastor must set an example in every area. A godly character creates moral authority.”¹⁶³

In listing the qualities of the Pastor/Elder, it is important to see the connection Paul makes between a candidate being “above reproach”, and “the husband of one wife”.¹⁶⁴ If the Pastor/Elder is married he must protect that relationship ensuring that the spiritual concerns of other do not become the occasion for temptation. “A man’s wife must be the sole fountain from which he drinks for the fulfilment and satisfaction of physical and sexual desire – both in thought and physical act. We are to love our wives not only as we did in our youth, but with a growing love.”¹⁶⁵

The area of moral purity is an area of great danger for the Pastor/Elder. The ministry continually brings church leaders into sensitive and emotionally charged contact with others. This brings potential for temptation and moral failure. To guard against these dangers Pastors/Elders are to heed the warning found in Proverbs, “*Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.*”¹⁶⁶

GROWING IN GODLINESS

All Christians are called to “*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*”¹⁶⁷ Pastors/Elders likewise are called to grow in the gifts that the Lord has furnished them for the task to which He has called them. We are to grow in our knowledge and understanding as we give ourselves to the study of God’s word. We are to grow in faith and love as the Spirit of God continues the work begun within us. This was the constant theme of Paul’s prayers for his readers. To the Philippians he wrote, “*And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.*”¹⁶⁸ To the Colossians, “*And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.*”¹⁶⁹

¹⁶¹ 1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:6

¹⁶² 1 John 3:3 ESV

¹⁶³ Zugg, p.72

¹⁶⁴ 1 Timothy 3:2 ESV

¹⁶⁵ Prime, Begg, p.45

¹⁶⁶ Proverbs 4:23 ESV

¹⁶⁷ 2 Peter 3:18 ESV

¹⁶⁸ Philippians 1:9-11 ESV

¹⁶⁹ Colossians 1:9-12 ESV

In both prayers, we note the apostle's concern for spiritual growth: growth in the knowledge of God with Spiritual wisdom and understanding that is evidenced in fruitful lives to the praise of God. This concern for growth reflects the will of God for his people. Paul states, "*For this is the will of God, your sanctification.*"¹⁷⁰ Obviously this is but part of God's will, as in a later verse Paul call the Thessalonians to "*give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*"¹⁷¹ Here the 'will of God' points to God's moral plan for human beings that is to be both known and put into practice. This call to be sanctified according to the will of God corresponds to what is said elsewhere "*but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'*"¹⁷²

The word "growth" pictures progress. All believers are to make progress in the life of Sanctification. A progress that will not reach completion until glory, but nevertheless a progress that is to be real. The longer the Pastor/Elder is in office the greater should be his piety: that attitude of heart that seeks first to please God in all things without concern to be seen on others. What a Pastor is in private shapes what he is in public. Without personal godliness, men fail even to qualify for spiritual office in the Church.

In warning Timothy as to the dangers of ministering in the "last days", Paul warns of those who are, "*lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power.*"¹⁷³ One commentator writes, "When Paul speaks of 'a form of godliness', he means that it is possible to engage in the outward ritual of worship, in the hymns, the prayers and the liturgy, but know nothing of the inward power of the Holy Spirit. And without the reality of the presence and power of God, religion is an empty formality, and empty religion makes for empty souls of which we have more than enough in many churches today."¹⁷⁴ Paul is straightforward in his advice to Timothy, "*Avoid such people.*"

Paul rejects the empty piety of false teaching, contending for a piety of substance: "*But godliness with contentment is great gain.*"¹⁷⁵ Not only is godliness necessary, he contends it brings advantage. True godliness with contentment is spiritual gain, spiritual riches.¹⁷⁶ Paul associates this promise of contentment with the pure doctrine of Jesus. "*If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing.*"¹⁷⁷

In 1 Timothy 4:7 Paul calls Timothy to "*train yourself for godliness.*" Pastor/Elders should not waste time; they must exercise and train hard to achieve godliness. "It takes godly training as well and good teaching to make a good minister . . . The word 'train' . . . was a general exhortation to hard exercise while doing disciplined training"¹⁷⁸. The growth of Pastor/Elders in godliness requires rigorous effort and uncompromising discipline.

¹⁷⁰ 1 Thessalonians 4:3 ESV

¹⁷¹ 1 Thessalonians 5:18 ESV

¹⁷² 1 Peter 1:15-16 ESV

¹⁷³ 2 Timothy 3:2-5 ESV

¹⁷⁴ Williams, P. p. 69

¹⁷⁵ 1 Timothy 6:6 ESV

¹⁷⁶ Zugg, p.100

¹⁷⁷ 1 Timothy 6:3-4a ESV

¹⁷⁸ Zugg, p.69

Commenting on these verses, Stott asks “How then are we to ‘exercise ourselves unto godliness’? What spiritual gymnastics are we to undertake? Paul does not go into detail. But the context, and in particular the parallel between nourishment and exercise, together suggest that we are to exercise ourselves in the same way that we nourish ourselves, namely in the Word of God.”¹⁷⁹

What does godliness look like? Paul’s theology of godliness throughout the Pastoral letters draws exclusively upon the person and work of Christ Jesus. The practice of Christ in his life, death, and resurrection provides the basis for Paul’s definition of godliness. Godliness concerns the godly Son of God.

In chapter 3 of his first letter to Timothy, Paul says that he is writing as he does so “*you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God.*”¹⁸⁰ He then introduces a confession about the humiliation and exaltation of Jesus Christ: “*Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.*”¹⁸¹ This “mystery of godliness” parallels the “Mystery of Faith.”¹⁸² A mystery is something which has been hidden but which now God has revealed in the gospel.¹⁸³ Godliness for Paul not only looks to Christ Jesus for its meaning, but also finds its very realization and revelation in him. The “mystery of godliness” is now on display. Where do we see it? Only in one place, one Man. Godliness glimmers in the righteous and glorified Son of God: manifested before men, vindicated by the Spirit of God, seen by angels, proclaimed by witnesses, believed by untold numbers, and glorified in his heavenly exaltation and session at the Father’s right hand.

For Paul, godliness is attained in the life of Christ. The Pastor/Elder’s call to godliness is a call to Christ-likeness.

¹⁷⁹ Stott, J. R. W. p. 117

¹⁸⁰ 1 Timothy 3:15 ESV

¹⁸¹ 1 Timothy 3:16 ESV

¹⁸² 1 Timothy 3:9 ESV

¹⁸³ Ephesians 1:9; 3:2, 6 ESV

Lecture Three Questions

1. How were the Thessalonians to imitate Paul?
2. How does Jesus exemplify being an example?
3. What five areas of character does Paul call Timothy to be an example in?
4. Why should all Christians, but especially Pastors, guard their speech?
5. What goal should the conduct of Pastors in the church reflect?
6. How does showing hospitality express love?
7. What must Pastors do to continue to be “apt to teach”?
8. Why is the area of moral purity a great danger for the Pastor?
9. What concern of the apostle Paul is revealed in his prayers for the Philippians and the Colossians?
10. Where is the “mystery of godliness” revealed?

LECTURE FOUR: THE PASTOR'S PRIORITIES

The purpose of the Lord in giving His church pastors is spelled out by the apostle Paul in his letter to the Ephesians: “*And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.*”¹⁸⁴ Paul writes that the exalted Christ bestows gifts on his church, and that their purpose is to equip God’s people for their ministries and so build up Christ’s body. The role of the Pastor/Elder, as one of the exalted Christ’s gifts, is not to ‘lord’ it over the church, but to serve the good of the church as a shepherd.¹⁸⁵ Peter reminds us that the role of the Pastor is ministerial not imperial. “The despised shepherd guarding his flock in the fields, not a pompous churchman, is the model of pastoral oversight; indeed, the model is the good Shepherd, who gave his life for the sheep.”¹⁸⁶

Pastors are “Servants”: servants of the Lord Jesus Christ and servants of His Church. This is how the Apostle Paul often introduces his letters; “*Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus,*”¹⁸⁷ “*Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus.*”¹⁸⁸ In these verses the phrase “servant (δοῦλος doulos) carries the meaning of “male slave” or “servant”, of “to being under someone’s total control.”¹⁸⁹ When Paul uses the term “*apostle*” to introduce himself, the same emphasis is present along with the aspect of authority for “Apostle” (ἀπόστολος apostolos) means “one sent as a messenger.” The apostle’s authority is derived from the one who sent him. His mission is to fulfil the purposes of the One who sent him. These titles used by Paul remind us that the office of Pastor/Elder exists for the church, the church does not exist for the office.

The local congregation does not belong to the Pastor: they belong to Christ who has purchased them with His blood¹⁹⁰. The priority of a Pastor is not to be liked, nor to have a large congregation, but to serve Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church as he serves the people whom He has redeemed, as Paul writes to the Galatians, “*For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.*”¹⁹¹ The Pastor is not called to be a “man-pleaser”. The priorities of gospel ministry are set not by surveys or what is fashionable, but by the Lord through the Scripture. The Pastor is first a servant of Christ. His is not autonomous. The servant answers to the master and is devoted to his service. Grasping this, the pastor is freed from the temptation to empire build, and from the tyranny of constantly looking over his shoulder to determine what others may think of him or his message. McWilliams comments, “In this way he avoided the trap into which the church often falls, desiring to become popular, to win men at the expense of faithfulness to the gospel message, rather than to be faithful, true and loyal to the message of grace. Calvin rightly reminds us that “those who determine to serve Christ faithfully must boldly despise the favor of men””¹⁹².

¹⁸⁴ Ephesians 4:11-14 ESV

¹⁸⁵ 2 Corinthians 1:24; 1 Peter 5:1-3 ESV

¹⁸⁶ Clowney, E. P. *The message of 1 Peter: the way of the cross.* p. 204

¹⁸⁷ Romans 1:1 ESV

¹⁸⁸ Philippians 1:1 ESV

¹⁸⁹ BDAG

¹⁹⁰ Acts 20:28 ESV

¹⁹¹ Galatians 1:10 ESV

¹⁹² McWilliams, D. B. *Galatians: A Mentor Commentary,* p. 41

FEED MY SHEEP

The primary goal of the shepherd is the care of his sheep, as Paul charged the Elders from Ephesus, “*Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.*”¹⁹³ As we shall see the imagery of the Shepherd is a strong Biblical image. An image that conveys the gravity of the responsibility these Elders carried. “Their task was to take care of the sheep—not to let them wander away, but to watch out for their health, defend them from enemies, and such things. The reason they were to do this is that the flock was not their flock but God’s. It is a flock Jesus purchased with his blood. The elders were to be overseers so that no one without and no one within would damage the flock for which Jesus died.”¹⁹⁴

The primary element of care for the flock, conveyed by Jesus, the Good Shepherd, to Peter as he was restored after the resurrection, is highlighted in the call to “*Feed my Sheep.*”¹⁹⁵ Peter’s profession of love for the Lord was to be expressed in the pastoral care of Christ’s people. This was a lesson that shaped Peter’s awareness of the calling to the work of the Pastor/Elder as conveyed to ‘fellow elders’, “*shepherd the flock of God that is among you.*”¹⁹⁶

The chief aim of a shepherd is to ensure his flock is well fed. The Pastor’s responsibility is to feed the sheep on the rich pasture of the Word of God. Prime & Begg comment, “He is to enlarge the flock’s understanding of the faith so that they may render a better obedience to Christ (Romans 1:5). As they are properly fed, they will be strong in the Lord and in the grace that is in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 6:10; 2 Timothy 2:1).”¹⁹⁷ The goal of the Pastor’s ministry is to “equip the saints” and to “feed the sheep” to the end that they respond with the obedience of faith.

PROCLAIMING THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD

It is common knowledge that in the physical realm a balanced diet is required for a healthy life. It is no different in the Spiritual realm. When Paul took his leave of the Elders of Ephesus he testified that he was free from the blood of all men for he had declared to them “*the whole counsel of God*”.¹⁹⁸ A balance diet for the health of the people of God requires a balanced proclamation and application of the whole Word of God. Throughout his ministry Paul faithfully taught from the complete revelation of God’s redemptive purposes concerning salvation and sanctification, not hesitating to preach anything that may be helpful to the people of God.

In his second letter to Timothy Paul declares, “*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*”¹⁹⁹ The word translated by the phrase “breathed out by God” (θεόπνευστος theopneustos) has the meaning of “expiration” and indicates not that Scripture itself or its human authors were breathed into by God, but that Scripture was breathed or breathed out by God.²⁰⁰ The Bible is more than the work of men. Peter tells his readers, “*For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*”²⁰¹

¹⁹³ Acts 20:28 ESV

¹⁹⁴ Boice, p.349

¹⁹⁵ John 21:15-17 ESV

¹⁹⁶ 1 Peter 5:2 ESV

¹⁹⁷ Prime, Begg, p.51

¹⁹⁸ Acts 20:27 ESV

¹⁹⁹ 2 Timothy 3:16-17 ESV

²⁰⁰ Stott, J. R. W. p. 101

²⁰¹ 2 Peter 1:21 ESV

Because the Bible is the inerrant and infallible Word of God it is not surprising that Paul says it is “profitable” *that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work*. Paul shows that the profit of Scripture relates to both creed and conduct. As for our creed, Scripture is profitable ‘for teaching the truth and refuting error’. As for our conduct, it is profitable ‘for reformation of manners and discipline in right living.’²⁰² It is only as the people of God are fed by the Word of God that they may become *complete, equipped for every good work*.

It is because of this sufficiency of Scripture that Paul charges Timothy to “*preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.*”²⁰³

To declare the complete will of God to His people through the preaching of the Word, Pastors must deliberately teach them from the whole of the Scriptures. Pastors need to discipline their preaching and teaching to reflect the balance we see for example in Paul Epistles. His usual pattern is to first outline doctrine and then move to practical application. This is seen in his letters to the Romans and Ephesians. In chapters 1-11 of Romans and chapters 1-3 of Ephesians, Paul gives gloriously rich theological and doctrinal teaching. In chapters 12-16 of Romans and chapters 4-6 of Ephesians Paul spells out the “therefore”, or the practical implications of this glorious doctrine for the lives of his readers.

We are to remember “*All Scripture is breathed out by God*” - both Old and New Testaments are “*profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.*” Pastors are faithful to God’s people only as we seek to feed them with the whole counsel of God from a whole bible, both *in public and from house to house.*²⁰⁴ When we make it our aim to preach and teach the whole of God’s will, using the whole of the Scriptures, we not only avoid personal preferences of themes to the detriment of others, we will help our people see, as Paul tells the Romans, “*whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.*”²⁰⁵

Pastor/Elders are called first and foremost to faithfulness to Scripture rather than a doctrinal or denominational position.

THE GOAL OF PROCLAIMING THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD.

Paul tells the Ephesians that the goal of proclaiming the whole counsel of God and feeding the sheep is “*to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.*”²⁰⁶ To the Colossians he puts it this way “*Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.*”²⁰⁷ Lucas comments on this verse, “To achieve his purposes of proclaiming Christ to everyone, Paul describes his ministry in two complementary ways. Negatively, he *warns* the young believers, correcting and admonishing them as it is necessary: positively, he *teaches* them the whole counsel of God. This is one more example of Paul’s balanced view of ministry. Neither aspect of pastoral instruction can be neglected without loss. Paul did not shrink, as we are tempted to do, from the

²⁰² Stott, J. R. W. p. 103

²⁰³ 2 Timothy 4:2 ESV

²⁰⁴ Acts 20:20 ESV

²⁰⁵ Romans 15:4 ESV

²⁰⁶ Ephesians 4:12-13 ESV

²⁰⁷ Colossians 1:28 ESV

uncongenial work of rebuking error and evil . . . Such warnings are therefore essentially positive in intention and result, and they are indispensable to a balanced teaching ministry.²⁰⁸

God's ultimate goal in His purposes of Redemption is that those whom he foreknew and predestined be conformed to the image of his Son.²⁰⁹ The purpose of Pastoral Ministry is that those who by grace through faith are united to Jesus Christ be presented mature, having attained the stature of the fullness of Christ. So Paul could speak of his desire to present the Corinthians "as a pure virgin to Christ."²¹⁰

The aim of the preaching/teaching ministry among the saints, therefore, is to encourage spiritual growth in the light of the understanding of the gospel given through apostolic proclamation.²¹¹ The ground and motivation for Christians to grow to maturity is the gospel of God's grace. It is as the Lord's people live out of a sense of the Grace of God received in their salvation, that they will joyfully see the pursuit of sanctification as a privilege rather than an onerous task.

The goal of Pastoral ministry is the growth in Christlikeness and obedience to the Word of Christ of every believer. This is something that is reflected in the prayers of the apostle Paul for his readers as much as in his teaching. One example would suffice to make the point. In his letter to the believers in Colosse Paul declares, "*And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.*"²¹²

The Holy Spirit, who indwells all believers, works within them, to conform them to the image of Christ. This working is expressed in the lives of believers as they grow in their love toward both fellow believers and their enemies, fulfilling the apostle's injunction, "*Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*"²¹³ That is, that Christians, as they grow, may demonstrate in daily life the reality of their new birth by living as their Saviour did.

The scope of this ministry covers all who are in the church. To the Colossians Paul testifies of his own ministry, "*Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.*"²¹⁴ "Pastors are to be concerned for every Christian, without exception. Men and women—young and old—whom God brings into our care will be at different stages of spiritual experience. Starting where they are, we are to bring them to where God wants them in obedience and holiness of life."²¹⁵

In his statement to the Colossians, Paul reminds Pastors of the eschatological nature of their ministry. That is, the ultimate goal of ministry is to "*present everyone mature in Christ.*" To the Thessalonians Paul writes, "*For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is*

²⁰⁸ Lucas, R. C. *Fullness & freedom: the message of Colossians & Philemon* p. 71.

²⁰⁹ Romans 8:29 ESV

²¹⁰ 2 Corinthians 11:2 ESV

²¹¹ Romans 12:1; Ephesians 4:1

²¹² Colossians 1:9-12 ESV

²¹³ Ephesians 4:32 ESV

²¹⁴ Colossians 1:28 ESV

²¹⁵ Prime, Begg, p.56

it not you? For you are our glory and joy.”²¹⁶ Stott comments, “What Paul seems to mean, in this transport of love, is that his joy in this world and his glory in the next are tied up with the Thessalonians, whom Christ through the apostle’s ministry has so signally transformed.”²¹⁷ On the last day, at the coming of Christ to usher in the consummation of the Kingdom, Pastors will see the ultimate realization of their ministry, the fruit of their labours in those who were entrusted to their care standing with gladness, thanksgiving and praise, before the Lord. This thought encourages the Pastor to take the long-term view of ministry.

This ultimate goal is accomplished through the proclamation of Christ.²¹⁸ In a day and age where the pressure is upon the novel and the practical, where doctrine is disparaged, the Pastor needs to remember that it is through the ‘Word of Christ’²¹⁹ that this ministry is progressed. This is why the apostle warns Timothy and then charges him as he does in his second letter: “*I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.*”²²⁰

The Pastor’s preaching the Word is to be Christo-centric. Pastors are to seek to ensure that in all expressions of ministry, either in preaching, teaching or shepherding, they hold forth the person of Christ. Christo-centric pastoral ministry not only sees the all scripture points to and finds its fulfilment in Christ, but also recognises that pastoral ministry should always lead believers to Him and show the connection of all other aspects of Christian doctrine to His saving work and His pre-eminence in God’s purposes of redemption.

Together with the proclaiming of Christ, there must be *warning* and *teaching*. As Pastors minister to the Lord’s people they must point them to that feature of Christ’s person and work that most pertinently applies to their situation. In his first letter to the Thessalonians Paul charges them to “*respect those who labour among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you,*”²²¹ revealing as he does so that admonishing or *warning* are the special responsibility of those called to be Pastor/Elders.

The word translated *warning* or *admonishing* comes from *νουθετέω* (*noutheteō*), which carries the meaning of “to counsel about avoidance or cessation of an improper course of conduct.”²²² The word for teaching comes from *διδάσκω* (*didaskō*), which carries the meaning of telling someone what to do, to instruct or teach in both formal and informal settings.

In the proclamation of Christ, as Paul describes it “*warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom*”, spiritual warning and teaching call for considerable wisdom.²²³ The word for wisdom is *σοφία* (*Sophia*), which implies the capacity to understand a truth and function accordingly.²²⁴ The

²¹⁶ 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 ESV

²¹⁷ Stott, J. R. W. *The message of Thessalonians: the gospel & the end of time* p. 63.

²¹⁸ Colossians 1:28 ESV

²¹⁹ Colossians 3:16 ESV

²²⁰ 2 Timothy 4:1-5 ESV

²²¹ 1 Thessalonians 5:12 ESV

²²² BDAG

²²³ Colossians 1:28 ESV

²²⁴ BDAG

wisdom comes from the fear of the Lord, respect for His Word, and sensitivity to His Spirit—the wisdom that is from above.²²⁵ Lucas summarises, “the great apostle sees himself as having no authority to decide his message, his mission, or his methods of ministry. What God has given, that he teaches, neither more nor less . . . because the supreme activity of God is to disclose his Word of truth, Paul’s supreme activity is as a teacher of truth.”²²⁶

THE GOAL OF PREPARING GOD’S PEOPLE FOR WORKS OF SERVICE

An essential in presenting everyone mature before Christ is the present goal of ministry as Paul states in Ephesians 4:12, “*to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.*” Concerning this verse and its implications for the ministry of the Pastor, Stott writes, “His teaching and training are directed to this end, to enable the people of God to be a servant people, ministering actively but humbly according to their gifts in a world of alienation and pain. Thus, instead of monopolizing all ministry himself, he actually multiplies ministries.”²²⁷

The Pastor’s particular responsibility is to equip God’s people through the preaching, teaching and shepherding ministry for their individual works of service. The church is described as the “Body of Christ” with each member having particular gifts and particular roles to play in the healthy functioning and growth of the body.²²⁸ It is through the ministry of the word that Pastors equip every member to fulfil his or her calling. “And the ultimate purpose of this is to build up his body, the church. For clearly the way the whole body grows is for all its members to use their God-given gifts. These gifts are so beneficial both to those who exercise their ministry faithfully and to those who receive it that the church becomes steadily more healthy and mature.”²²⁹

KEEP WATCH OVER YOURSELF AND THE FLOCK UNTIL THE TASK IS COMPLETE

Paul expresses another priority for Pastors in his counsel to the Ephesian Elders, “*Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.*”²³⁰ These elders were to pay careful attention to themselves and only then over the flock entrusted to their care.

This underlines a principle Pastors need to constantly remember: Pastors cannot adequately care for the people of God under their charge, if they neglect the care and nurture of their own spiritual life. They are to keep their lives upright. They are to keep their relationships to God strong. Pastors are called to cultivate, nurture and guard the very qualities that marked them as being gifted for the office.²³¹ This touches on a subject to be covered in other lessons, namely the spiritual/devotional life of the Pastor. How pointed is it that in a matter of decades, Jesus is warning the church at Ephesus, “*I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first.*”²³²

²²⁵ James 3:17–18 ESV

²²⁶ Lucas, p. 73

²²⁷ Stott, p. 167

²²⁸ 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

²²⁹ Stott, p. 168

²³⁰ Acts 20:28-30 ESV

²³¹ I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9

²³² Revelation 2:4-5 ESV

In Paul's letter to the Ephesians there are at least twenty references to love. But by the time of the Revelation, the church had abandoned this first love; pointing to a loss of that devotion to Jesus that so often characterises a new believer. Pastors need to remember that it is possible to serve, sacrifice and even to suffer and yet not really love Christ. Labour is no substitute for love, neither is purity for passion. It is only as the pastor loves Christ fervently that he can serve Him faithfully. Paying careful attention to themselves, Pastors are then in a position to keep a proper watch over the flock. For Pastors cannot adequately care for the souls of others if they neglect the care and culture of their own souls.

Paul then warns them, *to care for the church of God*. As we have seen the image of the shepherd is made frequent use of throughout scripture, speaking of God's care for his people and the role the leaders are to have in the national life of Israel. It is the image Jesus uses of Himself, as when he said, *"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."*²³³ Although Paul does not frequently use the image in his writings, when he does, as in Acts 20, he is calling the elders to imitate Jesus. Their charge was to take care of the sheep and not to allow them stray, but to be careful for their spiritual health and well-being.

A true pastor aims not only aims at feeding the flock and caring for the flock, but also at protecting the flock. In John 10, Jesus speaks of the false shepherd *"a hired hand and not a shepherd,"* one who *"sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep."*²³⁴ By contrast Jesus is the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep. The Pastor in his care of the flocks shows the genuineness of his calling by doing likewise. He must guard carefully the well being of every soul entrusted to him.

The Pastor's motivation for having the priority of feeding the sheep, of equipping the saints and caring for the church of God, is that they were *"obtained with his own blood."* The elders in Ephesus were to be overseers so that no one from outside and no one within the church would harm the flock for which Jesus died.

WHO IS SUFFICIENT FOR THESE THINGS?

As we contemplate the Biblical priorities for Pastoral ministry we cannot help but be overwhelmed by their challenge. We begin to understand Paul's question asked in the light of the enormity of his calling, *"Who is sufficient for these things?"*²³⁵ The work is so holy and the issues involved in it so solemn that such a response is natural. The honest answer is that no one, in and of themselves, is sufficient for these things. Certainly, the apostle Paul did not consider himself equal to the task. Rather in the following chapter, Paul ascribes all sufficiency to god when he writes, *"but our sufficiency is from God, who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant."*²³⁶ In seeking to defend both his ministry and the church at Corinth from the so called 'super-apostles' points to the secret of pastoral ministry. As Barnett comments, "The ministry of Paul and all who have subsequently become ministers of the new covenant is not offered for the approval of man but for the endorsement of God. It was *before God* that Paul had his *confidence*. Nor does the strength which all ministers of the word of

²³³ John 10:11 ESV

²³⁴ John 10:12-13 ESV

²³⁵ 2 Corinthians 2:16 ESV

²³⁶ 2 Corinthians 3:5-6 ESV

God need come from within themselves. Ministers of the gospel will say with Paul, *our competence comes from God.*²³⁷

If a man is called by God, to the office of Pastor and seeks to carry out his responsibilities with His resources, then he will be made equal to the task. “Those whom God calls, He equips - that is the testimony of the Bible, of history, and of experience”²³⁸.

The personal priority of the Pastor is that which was presented to Timothy by the apostle: “*Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.*”²³⁹ Says Williams, “Here Paul is urging Timothy to see himself as a good workman for God. In ministry, the difference between the good and bad workman is that the former wants the approval of God upon his work, whereas the latter wants the approval of men. Timothy will have God’s approval and blessing on his preaching and teaching if he ‘correctly handles the word of truth’ and has no ‘need to be ashamed’ of his ministry.”²⁴⁰

²³⁷ Barnett, p. 64

²³⁸ Prime, Begg, p.63

²³⁹ 2 Timothy 2:15 ESV

²⁴⁰ Williams, P. p. 57

Lecture Four Questions

1. What was the purpose of Christ's gifts to His church?
2. From what does the realisation that he is a servant of Christ, free the Pastor?
3. What is the goal of the Pastor's ministry?
4. How does Scripture profit both creed and conduct?
5. How do Pastors show their faithfulness to God's people in preaching/teaching?
6. What is the ultimate purpose of Pastoral ministry?
7. How is a "Christo-centric" pastoral ministry expressed?
8. What principle do Pastors constantly need to remember concerning care for their own souls?
9. What is the Pastor's motivation for caring for the people?
10. What is the source of a Pastor's confidence in approaching ministry?

LECTURE FIVE: THE PASTOR'S PRAYER LIFE

THE PASTOR'S PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP TO GOD

First and foremost the Pastor is a child of God: a sinner saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, who has subsequently by called, equipped and set apart for the task of shepherding the flock of God. Essential to caring for the flock of God is the care of the Pastor's own soul. The apostle Paul warned the Ephesian Elders, "*Pay careful attention to yourselves.*"²⁴¹ To the Corinthian Paul spoke about his own spiritual self-discipline "*lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.*"²⁴² The Pastor therefore is to give priority to his own devotional life. In speaking to his disciples, Jesus alluded the importance of personal devotion in ministering to others when he said, "*Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.*"²⁴³ As Carson Comments, "Jesus' disciples claim they have understood what he has been teaching. "Therefore," he responds, "disciplined teachers of the Scriptures, if they have understood, must themselves bring out of their storeroom the treasures now theirs so as to teach others."²⁴⁴

Along with study and godly living, prayer is the primary expression of our relationship to God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Calling God "Father" in truth is the highest privilege that flows from faith in Jesus Christ. This is the manifestation of the ministry of the Holy Spirit indwelling every believer, by whom we cry "*Abba! Father!*"²⁴⁵ A prayer-less Christian is a contradiction in terms. Therefore, before his calling to be a shepherd of God's flock, every pastor is called to live as a Christian and called to express the reality of his spiritual life in Christ through prayer.

The public life of the Pastor cannot be separated from his private personal life, indeed his public life flows from his private personal life. "Effective prayer in pastoral work arises from the habit of private prayer for prayer's own sake—or, better, for the sake of fellowship with God."²⁴⁶ Paul has already stated that a Pastor is to be "*sober-minded, self-controlled.*"²⁴⁷ Peter uses very similar terms in his first letter adding the reason for being sober-minded and self-controlled: "*for the sake of your prayers.*"²⁴⁸ Clowney comments, "Sobriety and a clear mind have one value above others. They equip us for prayer. Peter does not think of prayer as an effort to induce ecstasy, but as sober, direct, profoundly thoughtful communication with the Lord."²⁴⁹ The inference being that effective prayer in Pastoral Ministry flows from a disciplined private personal prayer life.

The Pastor, as we have seen, is to set an example for the flock. It is crucial that Pastors set the people an example of a disciplined prayer life. We learn from the gospels that Jesus rose early in the morning to pray.²⁵⁰ The Apostle Paul gives testimony of continual prayers for his readers. For example, telling

²⁴¹ Acts 20:28 ESV

²⁴² 1 Corinthians 9:27 ESV

²⁴³ Matthew 13:52 ESV

²⁴⁴ Carson

²⁴⁵ Galatians 4:6

²⁴⁶ Prime, Begg, p.66

²⁴⁷ 1 Timothy 3:2 ESV

²⁴⁸ 1 Peter 4:7 ESV

²⁴⁹ Clowney, E. P. *The message of 1 Peter: the way of the cross*, p. 178.

²⁵⁰ Mark 1:35 ESV

the Colossians, “*from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you,*”²⁵¹ and the Thessalonians, “*We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers.*”²⁵² When Pastors themselves have a disciplined personal prayer life what they say about prayer in public will have the ring of truth about it.

PRAYER: A PASTOR’S PRIORITY

It was the apostles who underlined the priority of prayer in the Pastoral ministry for us. In Acts 6 we read of the dispute arising in the church in Jerusalem over the daily distribution for the care of widows. The apostles found themselves distracted from their task of “*preaching the Word of God.*” In response seven men “*of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom,*”²⁵³ were chosen to look after this situation. Freed from this responsibility the Apostles said, “*we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.*”²⁵⁴ Stott comments, “It is noteworthy that now the Twelve have added prayer to preaching (probably meaning public as well as private intercession) in specifying the essence of the apostles’ ministry. They form a natural couple, since the ministry of the word, without prayer that the Spirit will water the seed, is unlikely to bear fruit,” concluding, “those called to ‘prayer and the ministry of the word’ must on no account allow themselves to be distracted from their priorities.”²⁵⁵

Prayer is essential in the work of the Pastor. In the word order of Acts 6:4 it is given priority over the preaching of the word. This indicates the dynamic relationship between prayer and preaching. Paul calls the Word of God “*the sword of the Spirit.*”²⁵⁶ In seeking God in prayer the Pastor is seeking the Spirit’s help to wield the sword effectively. It is instructive and encouraging to read of the consequences of this action by the Apostles. Luke tells us “*the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem,*”²⁵⁷ confirming the connection between prayer and the Lord’s blessing on the preached Word.

The priority of prayer given by the Apostles reminds us of the context for Pastoral Ministry: Spiritual warfare. In 2 Timothy 2 the apostle calls Timothy “*a good soldier of Christ Jesus.*”²⁵⁸ Epaphroditus is also described as a “*fellow soldier.*”²⁵⁹ On this metaphor Williams comments, “Soldiering can be tough at times, but it can also bring its own rewards. So it is with ministry. Like a soldier on active service, the Christian pastor is in the forefront of the spiritual warfare that rages in the world between the forces of truth and righteousness and the powers of darkness and falsehood. He will devote himself therefore to pleasing his Lord in the same way as the soldier concentrates on his soldiering in order to please his commanding officer. Furthermore, just as the soldier is called to be a soldier and not to get involved in civilian affairs, so the pastor must give himself essentially to the work of pastoring, and not get so tied up with secular matters that they hinder him from fruitful study of God’s Word and the care of souls.”²⁶⁰

²⁵¹ Colossians 1:9 ESV

²⁵² 1 Thessalonians 1:2 ESV

²⁵³ Acts 6:3 ESV

²⁵⁴ Acts 6:4 ESV

²⁵⁵ Stott, p. 121-122

²⁵⁶ Ephesians 6:17 ESV

²⁵⁷ Acts 6:7 ESV

²⁵⁸ 2 Timothy 2:3 ESV

²⁵⁹ Philippians 2:25

²⁶⁰ Williams, P. pp. 40–41

Like all Christians, Pastors experience a continual fight between the flesh and the Spirit.²⁶¹ Essential to the Christian's spiritual armour, as outlined by Paul in his letter to the Ephesians is prayer: "*praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.*"²⁶² It is only as we take up all the armour of God that the Pastor, along with every Christian, "*may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.*"²⁶³

Paul urges timothy to both "*wage the good warfare,*" and "*Fight the good fight of the faith.*"²⁶⁴ The language ably depicts the military metaphor used to describe the ministry. In 1:18 "The word 'wage' (or 'fight') is military terminology. The Greek word (*strateuē*) indicates an army camped and ready for war. The Christian life and spiritual leadership are battles wherein we must use the spiritual weapons given to us in order to overcome. The weapons are not physical, but spiritual in nature, thus reflecting the nature of the warfare . . . Timothy is called to defend the central doctrines of the Christian faith, oppose false doctrine, and promote love with a good conscience in the church (1:5)."²⁶⁵ Stott comments, "Certainly to defend the revealed truth of God against those who deny or distort it, and to 'demolish strongholds' of error, is to engage in a dangerous and difficult fight, which demands spiritual weapons, especially 'the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God'."²⁶⁶

In 1 timothy 6:12 "Paul calls Timothy to fight for the faith and maintain the true doctrine of the church as some have wandered from it (vv. 10, 21) . . . he is stressing voluntary athletic agony, the agony of competition (*cp.* 2 Tim. 4:7; 1 Cor. 9:24-27). The Greek word *agōnizō* in this phrase is a play on words. It means 'agonize the good agony.' Ministry is an ongoing struggle calling for discipline (*cp.* Col. 1:29). In war or competition, Timothy must never rest."²⁶⁷ To "*fight the good fight of faith*", the weapon of prayer is crucial.

This principle is exemplified in the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus. Not only did He prioritize prayer, He prayed at important junctures of His ministry: He continued in prayer for a night before He chose the Twelve Disciples.²⁶⁸ Luke tells us Jesus prayed alone before asking the disciples the key question concerning their understanding of His identity.²⁶⁹ Jesus told Peter that He had prayed for him, that he would not utterly fall in the face of his severest temptation.²⁷⁰

PASTOR'S PERSONAL DEVOTIONS

The Pastor's public life is to flow from a private live that is rooted in his relationship with the Lord. Sadly it is very easy to fall into the trap of the religious hypocrite who prays in public to be seen of men, betraying the lack of private personal communion with the Lord. Jesus warned his hearers, "*When you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*"²⁷¹

²⁶¹ Galatians 5:17

²⁶² Ephesians 6:18 ESV

²⁶³ Ephesians 6:13 ESV

²⁶⁴ 1 Timothy 1:18, 6:12 ESV

²⁶⁵ Zugg, p.27

²⁶⁶ Stott, p. 56

²⁶⁷ Zugg, p.105

²⁶⁸ Luke 6:12-16 ESV

²⁶⁹ Luke 9:18-22 ESV

²⁷⁰ Luke 22:32 ESV

²⁷¹ Matthew 6:6 ESV

One of the dangers of pastoral ministry is to be so taken up with the legitimate spiritual needs of others that we neglect our own. Alternatively, a real danger for Pastors is that we adopt a wrong “professional” attitude that is little more than an external form of godliness that denies the power thereof. Both dangers are real and at best are counter-productive and at worst soul destroying for both pastor and the people.

The need of Pastors to focus on developing healthy prayer lives reflects the recognition that their relationship to God is more important than their service. As important as the pastoral ministry is, God desires the pastor’s heart, as He does with all his people. Just as worship that is not more than mere lip service is an affront to God, so is Ministry that is not heart-felt and flowing from a whole-hearted relationship with Himself.

The heart of a covenantal relationship with God is love. Jesus summed up the whole law in this way, *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”*²⁷² The priority of the Pastors life must be to love God. Paul significantly ends his letter to the Ephesians with the words, *“Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.”*²⁷³

In restoring Peter after he publicly denied Jesus 3 times, Jesus asked him three times *“Simon, son of John, do you love me?”*²⁷⁴ Peter was to understand that his service of Jesus was to be founded not upon his strength or courage, but upon his love for Jesus. All Christian service is grounded upon, motivated and shaped by Christ’s love for us²⁷⁵ and our love for him²⁷⁶.

A Pastor’s prayer life is an expression of his ‘walk’ with the Lord. To walk with someone implies keeping in step with that person. The phrase “walk” refers to the tenor of life a person lives. The Pastor, as with every Christian, is to seek to maintain a close relationship with the Lord in his daily life. The glory of the Christian life as a living relationship with the triune God is wonderfully emphasised by the apostle John. Firstly in his gospel he records Jesus saying, *“If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”*²⁷⁷ In his first letter he writes, *“indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ,”*²⁷⁸ and Paul echoes this when he says to the Corinthians, *“God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”*²⁷⁹ The importance of the Pastor’s personal devotional life is to keep, guard, maintain and cultivate that personal relationship.

Essential to the enjoyment of this relationship is the Pastor’s nurturing his own soul on the Word of God. Jesus answered the temptation of the evil one to transform stones into bread to satisfy his hunger by reciting Deuteronomy 8:3, *“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”*²⁸⁰ Like every Christian, pastors need to nurture their never-dying souls through prayer and bible reading. As branches attached the vine, Pastors need to draw life and fruitfulness from

²⁷² Matthew 22:37-40 ESV

²⁷³ Ephesians 6:24 ESV

²⁷⁴ John 21:15-17 ESV

²⁷⁵ 2 Corinthians 5:14

²⁷⁶ Galatians 2:20

²⁷⁷ John 14:23 ESV

²⁷⁸ 1 John 1:3 ESV

²⁷⁹ 1 Corinthians 1:9 ESV

²⁸⁰ Matthew 4:4 ESV

the root. Jesus said, *“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”*²⁸¹ Pastors are often drained by the constant requirement to give of themselves. Essential to their being able to do so profitably is their own receiving through the Word of God and communion with their Saviour.

Like the Christians he is called to minister to the Pastor needs to be growing in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus.²⁸² The Pastor has to remember that God in *“His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,”* and that he is to *“make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self- control, and self- control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*²⁸³

The primary goal of the Pastor is not to be seeking “success” or popularity, but to seek to live a godly Christ-like life. This was Paul’s own testimony to the Philippians: *“Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”*²⁸⁴ The goal of God’s redemptive purposes in the lives of all Christians is that they be conformed to image of His Son.²⁸⁵ To become Christ-like, Pastors are to meditate upon Christ day by day. It is as Christ is manifest his life that the Pastor may be able to say with Paul, *“Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.”*²⁸⁶

Pastors need to remember that more important than all their preparation for ministry and their careful administration of church life is that they should live their lives for the will of God and reflect His Son’s grace and character in all their dealings with others. This will carry more weight with the congregation than any thing else. Sadly, it is the contradiction between the public and private lives of Pastors that cause the greatest damage to the church of Jesus Christ! The moral failures, which sadly all too frequently ruin a man’s testimony, terminate his ministry, devastate congregations and dishonour the Name of Christ, stem from the neglect daily communion with God. Growing in an awareness of the love and grace of God in Christ increases sensitivity to the first approaches of temptation and sin and strengthens our capacity to resist it by the power of the Spirit.

Every Pastor needs to cultivate the regular discipline of devotion, which would include elements of systematic Bible reading, meditation, prayer and worship. Self-examination is the duty of all Christians, but especially so of those called to have oversight of God’s Church.

²⁸¹ John 15:4-5 ESV

²⁸² 2Peter 3:18 ESV

²⁸³ 2 Peter 1:3, 5-8 ESV

²⁸⁴ Philippians 3:12-14 ESV

²⁸⁵ Romans 8:29

²⁸⁶ 1 Corinthians 11:1 ESV

As Pastors keep watch over their walk with God, they enjoy the peace He promises, the consciousness of His presence when they most need it, the assurance that they are where He wants them to be, the guidance of His Spirit, and the power to accomplish successfully their God-given tasks and privileges.

PRAYER AND PREACHING

We have seen above from Acts 6 that the apostles connected prayer with the ministry of the Word. It is crucial for us before opening up our study aids, as Pastors, to pray. In doing so, they remind themselves of their own inadequacies for the task of rightly dividing the word of God without the presence and enabling of the Holy Spirit to enlighten their understanding of Scripture. In doing so we consciously express both our dependence and our confidence in the promise of Christ concerning the Holy Spirit: *“he will teach you all things . . . he will bear witness about me . . . he will guide you into all the truth . . . for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.”*²⁸⁷ The importance of seeking the Lord in prayer in preparation for the preaching ministry of the Word is exemplified in the words of Derek Prime, *“It is as impossible to understand the Scriptures without the Spirit’s help as it is to read a sundial without the sun.”*²⁸⁸

One key element of the Pastor’s prayer in preparation for preaching ministry is to seek to apply the lessons from the Word to himself before seeking to apply them to the congregation. Pastors need to pray for a sense of ministering primarily before the Lord. Pastors are called, set apart and equipped by the Risen Lord to be heralds of His gospel. Not only does such awareness bring a solemn sense of responsibility to how we handle and proclaim the Word, it liberates us from the fear of men. Pastors need to be praying that the Lord would attend the preaching of the Word to the benefit of His people and to the glory of His Name.

PRAYER AS PART OF OUR PASTORAL MINISTRY

The major part of Pastoral care is unobserved by those who profit from it, as it is carried on in secret. Prayer is one means by which Pastors fulfill their calling to care for the flock of God over whom the Holy Spirit has placed them. Intercession is essential to Pastoral ministry and it reflects the current ministry of Christ who we are distinctly told makes intercession for those who come to God through Him.²⁸⁹ Therefore, there is a sense in which under-shepherds are not closer to the example of the Great Shepherd than when they intercede for His people.

Prayer is key as Pastor’s follow up the preaching ministry with Pastor Care expressed in personal visitation. Considering the enormous challenges of Pastoral Ministry in terms of the complicated issues encountered in visitation, prayer is essential. The prayer of King Solomon is a wonderful expression of pastoral dependence upon God. When God invited Solomon to ask for of God what he desired, the king responded, *“And now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people.”*²⁹⁰ Such a prayer pleased God, who granted the request abundantly.

²⁸⁷ John 14:26, 15:26, 16:13, 14 ESV

²⁸⁸ Prime, Begg, p.78

²⁸⁹ Hebrews 7:25 ESV

²⁹⁰ 1 Kings 3:7-9 ESV

In the face of some of the perplexing personal problems experienced by the people of God in our contemporary society Pastors very quickly are brought to feel their need of wisdom from above. And so James encourages Christians to pray: *“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.”*²⁹¹ As they consider Pastoral Visitation, Pastors need to pray for wisdom, sensitivity, and understanding that they may be able to rightly handle the word of God finding again that the Scriptures are *“profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.”*²⁹² As pastors prayerfully embark on this aspect of their ministry they may find that although they had prepared some scriptures they believed pertinent to the situation, other Scriptures will come to mind when we are with the person concerned.

The Word of God is fundamental to pastoral Visitation and Counselling. Whatever the particular need encountered it is essential for the Pastor to seek to apply God’s Word: whether it be for admonition or comfort, showing a person what the Scriptures have to say about a problem or an issue, and indicating the benefits and guidance for which it is appropriate to ask God in prayer. Praying with those visited should be seen as a primary purpose of a pastoral visit. Where the Word has been read first, prayer finds its natural starting point in what God says in the Scriptures.

PASTOR’S NEED OF PRAYER

The Apostle Paul’s example is a refreshing tonic in an age where Pastor’s can be tempted to feel self-sufficient. Throughout his letters, Paul reveals his sense of need of the prayers of those to whom he was writing. To the Romans he writes, *“I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf.”*²⁹³ In Romans 1:9-10 Paul states that he is continuously mentioning them in his prayers, and so it is entirely appropriate that he seeks their prayers for him here to avoid unbelievers in Judea, that his service to the saints in Jerusalem may be acceptable to them, and that he may be enabled to come to Rome.

As an Apostle and Pastor, Paul felt the need of the support of Christians in prayer in the face of the many dangers he met in his ministry. To the Corinthians he writes, *“You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.”*²⁹⁴ Says, Barnett, *“The Corinthians were powerless to help, being hundreds of miles away, yet Paul was confident that God, through their united prayers, would do what they in themselves could not do—deliver Paul from trouble.”*²⁹⁵

Although Paul was an Apostle, called and equipped by the risen Jesus to be His herald, he was humble enough to recognise his need of prayer for both opportunities to speak and the courage and ability to do so as he should. This need is expressed in his letter to the Ephesians, where encouraging Christians to pray for all the saints he asks *“also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel,”*²⁹⁶ and again to the Colossians, *“pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison—that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.”*²⁹⁷

²⁹¹ James 1:5 ESV

²⁹² 2 Timothy 3:16 ESV

²⁹³ Romans 15:30 ESV

²⁹⁴ 2 Corinthians 1:11 ESV

²⁹⁵ Barnett, P. p. 35

²⁹⁶ Ephesians 6:18-19 ESV

²⁹⁷ Colossians 4:3-4 ESV

Paul also expresses his sense of need for prayer for the blessing of God upon his ministry for spiritual fruit. To the Thessalonians he writes, “*Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you, and that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men.*”²⁹⁸ Stott comments, “The Thessalonians are asked to pray that the gospel may run well, run fast, and that, wherever it goes, it may have ‘a glorious reception’ . . . It is one thing for the gospel to win friends who embrace it; it is another for the evangelists to be rescued from its enemies who oppose it.”²⁹⁹ Paul’s sense of dependency upon the prayer support of those to whom he minister for every aspect of his ministry is summed up in the terse request in his first letter to the Thessalonians, “*Brothers, pray for us.*”³⁰⁰ Paul’s honest pleas for prayer remind us that Pastors need the prayers of God’s people and should not hesitate to ask for them. Paul regularly requested the prayers of his fellow believers because he understood his need of them and the effectiveness God gave to them.³⁰¹

²⁹⁸ 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2 ESV

²⁹⁹ Stott, p. 185

³⁰⁰ 1 Thessalonians 5:26-25 ESV

³⁰¹ Philippians 1:19 ESV

Lecture Five Questions

1. What are the primary expressions of the Pastor's relationship with God?
2. Why is it important for Pastors to have a disciplined prayer life?
3. What does Acts 6 tells us about the apostles' priority in ministry?
4. How did Jesus exemplify the importance of prayer?
5. What two dangers are Pastors to avoid?
6. Why did Jesus challenge Peter over whether he loved Him?
7. What is essential to a Pastor's ability to give of themselves in the service of others?
8. Why is prayer so important to the Pastor's preparation for preaching?
9. Why is prayer important in connection with pastoral Visitation?
10. What do Paul's regular requests for prayer teach Pastors?

LECTURE SIX: THE PASTOR & PREACHING

In Ephesians 4, the Apostle Paul tells his readers that the exalted Christ gave gifts to His church, among which are, “*shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.*”³⁰² So the role of the Shepherd/Teacher is to equip the saints for the work of ministry – service to one another that builds the body. The subject of this lecture is the means by which Pastor/Elders perform this task: preaching.

We have seen that under-shepherds are appointed and equipped by the Great Shepherd. They are called to feed his sheep. Therefore Jesus Himself becomes the pattern for Pastoral care. If we study the ministry of Jesus in the Gospels, we find that, although he performed many miracles, and showed great compassion in healing people’s bodies, the greater part of his ministry was given to preaching. Mark begins his Gospel with the words: ‘*Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God.*’³⁰³

Following his baptism and temptation in the wilderness, Jesus entered into his public ministry teaching in the Synagogues. When he came to Nazareth Jesus read from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, “*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.*”³⁰⁴ A major aspect of Jesus’ earthly ministry was proclamation of good news, and the subsequent gospel records show that the preaching of the Word of God was how that ministry was fulfilled. At the end of his ministry Jesus commissioned his followers to “*Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.*”³⁰⁵

Those called to be under-shepherds are likewise called to proclaim the good news. The essential nature of preaching to the work of the Kingdom is underlined by the apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans, “*How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news.”*”³⁰⁶ Commenting on these verses John Murray writes, “The main point is that the saving relation to Christ involved in calling upon his name is not something that can occur in a vacuum; it occurs only in a context created by proclamation of the gospel on the part of those commissioned to proclaim it.”³⁰⁷ It is as the good news of Jesus Christ is preached, that people are drawn by the Holy Spirit to come to him in faith. It is as Pastors continue to preach Jesus Christ that those who come to him in faith will go on to maturity in Jesus Christ.

THE CONTEXT OF PREACHING

Win writing to Timothy the Apostle calls the younger Pastor to the task of Preaching. “*I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort,*

³⁰² Ephesians 4:11-14 ESV

³⁰³ Mark 1:14 ESV

³⁰⁴ Luke 4:18-19 ESV

³⁰⁵ Mark 16:15 ESV

³⁰⁶ Romans 10:14-15 ESV

³⁰⁷ Murray, vol. 2, p. 58

with complete patience and teaching.”³⁰⁸

In the context of the Pastoral Epistles the “word” Timothy is to preach is the “Word of God.” As Stott comments, the word “God has spoken. His responsibility is not just to hear it, and to believe and obey what he hears; nor just to guard it from every falsification; nor just to suffer for it and continue in it; but now to preach it to others. It is good news of salvation for sinners. So he is to proclaim it like a herald in the market-place . . . He is to lift up his voice without fear or favour, and boldly to make it known.”³⁰⁹

The context in which Timothy is to carry out this charge is spelled out in the immediately following verses, “*For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.*”³¹⁰ “In other words, they cannot stand the truth and refuse to listen to it. Instead, they find teachers to suit the speculative fancies into which they are determined to wander.”³¹¹ This despising of “sound teaching” characterizes the age in which we live, as much as it did the 1st Century. In our post-modern, relativistic age of non-absolutes and selective toleration, preaching that is directive is decried. However, in the words of the apostle Peter, pastors are to speak “*as one who speaks oracles of God.*”³¹² Preaching is intentionally directive, and it ceases to be biblical if it is nondirective.

A note of urgency is injected into the charge from the apostle for Timothy to preach the word, “*be ready in season and out of season.*” The Greek verb, ἐφίστημι ephistēmi means “to be present in readiness to discharge a task,”³¹³ in this verse also carrying the meaning of “insistence and urgency.” Says, Stott, “All true preaching conveys a sense of the urgent importance of what is being preached. The Christian herald knows that he is handling matters of life and death. He is announcing the sinner’s plight under the judgment of God, the saving action of God through the death and resurrection of Christ, and the summons to repent and believe. How can he treat such themes with cold indifference?”³¹⁴ Such urgent preaching is to characterize the ministry of the Pastor “*in season and out of season*”. One Bible version translates this as ““Press it home on all occasions, convenient or inconvenient,”³¹⁵ whether the message is welcome or not to its hearers.

Biblical preaching is to *reprove, rebuke, and exhort*. Reproof (ἐλέγχω elenchō) or correction is required so that by sound reasoning from the Scriptures, spiritual and theological error and confusion can be rectified. Rebuke (ἐπιτιμάω epitimaō) carries the inference of convicting people of sin and bringing them to repentance. Whilst exhort (παρακαλέω parakaleō) reminds us that preaching is to also comfort and encourage the people of God.

Timothy is to pursue this ministry *with complete patience and teaching*. The Pastor’s obligation in preaching is to proclaim faithfully the message of the gospel, and the outcomes must be left to the work of the Holy Spirit. He is the One who will convict of sin and bring people to repentance, and he will use faithful preaching to do that.

³⁰⁸ 2 Timothy 4:1-2 ESV

³⁰⁹ Stott, p. 106

³¹⁰ 2 Timothy 4:3-4 ESV

³¹¹ Stott, p. 111

³¹² 1 Peter 4:11 ESV

³¹³ BDAG

³¹⁴ Stott, p. 107

³¹⁵ 2 Timothy 4:2 *The New English Bible* (New Testament, 1961; Old Testament, 1970).

PREACHING AND TEACHING

In Ephesians 4, the apostle Paul lists gifts the exalted Christ gives to his church: “*And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.*”³¹⁶

These gifts serve the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of ministry, and for building up the body of Christ. On these verses O’Brien comments, “The *pastors* (shepherds) and *teachers* are linked here by a single definite article in the Greek, which suggests a close association of functions between two kinds of ministers who operate within the one congregation (cf. 2:20). Although it has often been held that the two groups are identical (i.e., ‘pastors who teach’), it is more likely that the terms describe overlapping functions (cf. 1 Cor. 12:28–29 and Gal. 6:6, where ‘teachers’ are a distinct group). All pastors teach (since teaching is an essential part of pastoral ministry), but not all teachers are also pastors. The latter exercise their leadership role by feeding God’s flock with his word.”³¹⁷

A helpful and significant distinction is made in the New Testament between teaching and preaching, although both activities are found in the commonly accepted understanding of preaching. After the apostles had been arrested and released from prison in Jerusalem we read, “*And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.*”³¹⁸ Again, in Acts 15 following the Council in Jerusalem, as Paul and Barnabas were delivering the letter from the council to the church in Antioch, we read, “*Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.*”³¹⁹ Here we see a distinction is made between Teaching (from the verb διδάσκω *didaskō* which means to teach or to instruct) and Preaching (from the verb εὐαγγελίζω *euangelizō* which means to proclaim as good tidings or to announce good tidings of the Gospel). This distinction underlines the twofold approach we are to have in view of Pastoral ministry. In teaching Pastors aim to give people an understanding of God’s truth. Beginning often with the first principles of a doctrine, Pastors will seek to ensure that people grasp Truth as best they can in all its aspects. In preaching Pastors proclaim, herald, announce the Gospel of Jesus Christ appealing both to their hearers hearts and minds to respond to the Word that they have now understood through teaching.

The Pastor in his preaching aims to maintain a balance between teaching and preaching. The relation between these two elements may be understood in this way: First, there will be careful exposition of God’s truth, so that hearers clearly understand what God says in His Word, and then there will be an appeal to men and women’s hearts and wills to respond to God’s truth with faith and obedience. “When the two words are used together, preaching relates to the application of the Word that has been taught, since, once understood, it must be applied to our lives.”³²⁰

The word used for Pastor (ποιμήν *poimēn*) means “shepherd” or “one who tends flocks or herds.” For

³¹⁶ Ephesians 4:11-14 ESV

³¹⁷ O’Brien, p. 300

³¹⁸ Acts 5:42 ESV

³¹⁹ Acts 15:35 ESV

³²⁰ Prime, Begg, p.126

a Pastor to truly ‘shepherd’ the people of God, He must get to know them. This knowledge of his people will help the Pastor in his preaching. The better he knows the people he teaches, the more sensitive he will be to the appropriate balance of teaching and preaching required in every message. From the book of Acts we can see that the apostles adjusted their approach to Preaching and teaching according to the circumstances of their hearers. It appears that confronted with a Gentile audience without background knowledge of the Scriptures there is a strong element of teaching and preaching. When seeking to reach Jews with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures the emphasis seems to be upon preaching for a response. The experience Pastor will be enabled to discern the balance required in his preaching to his particular congregation.

THE PASTOR’S PREPARATION

Essential to the Pastoral work of Preaching and Teaching is a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. Pastors are called to “Preach the word”: the “word” refers to the enscripturated revelation of God. In writing to Timothy, Paul underlines the importance of a thorough grasp of the whole of scripture, its themes and its overriding message: *“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”*³²¹

Pastors must cultivate not only their knowledge of the Scriptures, but their own personal obedience to God through them, so that they themselves grow in their knowledge of the Lord. If Pastors are to follow Paul’s example in Ephesus and declare *“the whole counsel of God”*³²² they must study the Word to know the whole counsel of God. Paul declared that *“all scripture is breathed out by God and is profitable”* etc., and to the Romans he wrote, *“For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”*³²³ Pastors are to reflect the whole counsel of God as they seek to preach and teach from the whole Scripture: a balanced instruction from both Old and New Testaments.

Pastors need to compliment their scriptural knowledge with theological understanding. Whilst the Scriptures are the final authority for faith and practice within the church, Pastors are helped in their understanding by reading the great theological works of Church History. This reading also needs to be balanced. Pastors need to read from the wealth of every age: Early Church Fathers, Medieval Period, The Reformation, Puritan and Continental Reformed Tradition, up to the present day. Pastors are to draw from the learning of the church throughout the ages, resisting the temptation to focus just on any one particular age. Having distilled the understanding of previous eras Pastors are called to preach into their contemporary age.

In addition to theological works, Pastors must command an understanding of the history of the church. Many mistakes are made by failing to understand the context of bygone ages. The scriptures tell us that there is nothing new under the sun and the church needs to learn from the error of the past if we are to avoid repeating them in the present.

³²¹ 2 Timothy 3:14-17 ESV

³²² Acts 20:28-27 ESV

³²³ Romans 15:4 ESV

Pastors are called to “Pay careful attention to yourselves.”³²⁴ To keep their own hearts warm devotional reading is also to be pursued. Christian biographies of men and women used of God in the past, devotional works centering upon the person and work of Christ should be part of the Pastor’s diet of reading. Reading widely gives the Pastor a store of material to draw from in his Pastoral ministry.

Along with the discipline of structured study of the Scriptures and wider reading, the Pastor is prepared for ministry through the personal experience of suffering and trials. It is through the experience of trials either personal or the trials of those he ministers too, that the Pastor is further shaped and equipped to shepherd the people of God. The more the Pastor experiences the more he will be able to helpfully apply the Word of God to the people of God in the circumstances the Lord has led them.

When it comes to preparing the Message to be delivered to the people of God, the Pastor’s personal prayer and obedience is of utmost importance. How the Pastor approaches his preparation will ultimately affect the message. He must do so expressing his own dependence upon the Lord and personal willingness to be obedient to the Word he is to proclaim.

Having been diligent in careful preparation in the study the Pastor is to avoid overloading his people. Knowing what to leave out of a message is as important as knowing what to leave in. The tendency is to feel that everything discovered about the passage has to be delivered in one message. The goal of the Pastor is to make that which appears difficult to understand as simple as possible. There may well be historical and technical details that need to be incorporated into a message, but the Pastor is to ensure that the truth God wants to convey in a passage is not lost, buried under superfluous information.

THE PASTOR’S PREACHING

There are differing forms of preaching such as preaching on individual texts, preaching topically and expositional preaching through passages or books of the Bible. The benefit of a systematic exposition of Scripture, either through the books of the Bible or extending topics, is that a Pastor will cover subjects that otherwise might not be dealt with, but that God uses to bless people in a remarkable manner as they sit under the regular exposition of His Word. Biblical preaching arises out of the text and is not imposed upon the text. It is the testimony of many a Pastor that as they preach expository messages through the scriptures, God in His providence applies His word to the needs of His people, often without the Pastor’s knowledge of those needs.

From an incident in the Book of Nehemiah we can garner a principle Pastors are to constantly have in view. In Nehemiah 8 the people are gathered together to hear the reading of the Law by Ezra, during which the Levites “*read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.*”³²⁵ It is important that the Pastor work to help his hearers have a clear an understanding as possible, acknowledging that the hearers’ understanding ultimately is dependent upon the Holy Spirit. To aid that process of understanding the Pastor strives to explain biblical words and concepts that may be foreign to his hearers.

From the examples of the apostles’ preaching in the book of Acts we can see that the constituency of their hearers determined the nature of their sermons. In preaching to Jewish hearers the apostles could assume a level of understanding of the Old Testament Revelation³²⁶, but in preaching to Gentiles they

³²⁴ Acts 20:28 ESV

³²⁵ Nehemiah 8:8 ESV

³²⁶ Acts 2:14-36; 3:12-26

had to proclaim God as Creator before proclaiming Christ as savior.³²⁷ The Gospel makes sense only in the context of the knowledge of the God whose Law has been broken and who gave His Son to be the Saviour of those who have broken that Law.

THE PASTOR'S EVANGELISTIC PREACHING

Part of the regular preaching of the Pastoral ministry is Gospel or Evangelistic preaching. Preaching the Word inevitably includes proclamation of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. In his preaching ministry the Pastor aims to bring the truth of God's word to bear upon the heart and mind of the unbeliever. This involves a faithful setting forth of the truth concerning God's holiness, man's sin, God's judgment against sin, God's provision for sinners through the Person and work of His Son Jesus Christ, and how a sinner can be saved through believing in Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

The Pastor's confidence in this task must not be in the techniques of the world, but in the power of God's Word. As Paul writes to the Corinthians, "*the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.*"³²⁸ Barnett comments, "Like Paul, we are so to proclaim Jesus Christ as Son of God, as crucified to save sinners, as Lord and as judge, that *every thought* of the hearer is captured to obey *Christ*. Let it be said that preaching, whether based on the New Testament or the Old Testament, whether exegetical or thematic, fails at its most critical point if it does not on every occasion bring the claims of the Lordship of Christ and his saving power into the clearest focus."³²⁹ This was the apostle's testimony in his first letter to the Corinthians, "*And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*"³³⁰

Whilst avoiding a mechanistic formula for presenting the gospel the Pastor strives to preach the gospel in all its fullness, ensuring that no essential element is neglected. This cannot be done on every occasion the gospel is preached, but most if not of all of its elements will be present, although the spotlight may be upon only one. In this regard it is helpful to have a framework of biblical truths that comprise the core of 'Good News'.

The gospel firstly is "the gospel of God."³³¹ The message of the gospel concerns the true God, the Creator and Supreme Law-Giver, who at the appointed time, in accordance with the prophecies given through the Old Testament prophets, has sent His One and Only Son into the world to redeem His people, as Paul explains to the Galatians, "*But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.*"³³²

The occasion for this act of redemption was man's fall into sin and subsequent inability to free himself from God's righteous condemnation. God answer to man's plight is to graciously provide what man needs. Man's plight and God's provision are brought together in Paul's instruction to the Romans,

³²⁷ Acts 14:14-17; 17:22-31

³²⁸ 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 ESV

³²⁹ Barnett, p. 159

³³⁰ 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 ESV

³³¹ Romans 1:2-1 ESV

³³² Galatians 4:4 ESV

“For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former.”³³³

Essential to any proclamation of the gospel is Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah, sent by God, rejected and put to death by men on a cross outside of Jerusalem, and raised from the dead by God on the third day. These truths are essential to gospel preaching because it is by His death and resurrection, Jesus Christ has conquered sin and has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. The urgency of gospel preaching is underlined by the exclusivity of the claims of the Gospel. Jesus said, *“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me,”*³³⁴ and Peter declared, *“And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”*³³⁵ In response to this proclamation the Pastor is to call all men and women to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ the Messiah and Lord for the forgiveness of their sins, and they will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.³³⁶

The goal of the Pastor in evangelistic preaching is to present a clear and accurate portrait of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. As Jesus said, *“And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.”*³³⁷ Evangelistic preaching is the proclaiming of glories of the once crucified and now risen and glorified Saviour.

THE PREACHERS APPLICATION

As important as the proclamation of the doctrinal content of the Gospel is the explanation of the benefits of salvation in Jesus Christ. In writing to the Corinthians, Paul says of gospel ministry, *“All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God..”*³³⁸ Here he highlights the goal of Evangelistic preaching: that is, that those who hear and respond in faith may know reconciliation with God. The ministry which has as its focus reconciliation between the Holy Offended God and sinful men flows from the reconciling work of God accomplished through the life, death and resurrection of His son Jesus Christ. The word for “reconcile” (καταλλάσσω katallassō) is defined as “the exchange of hostility for a friendly relationship”.³³⁹ The task of winning the un-reconciled to God is given to the preacher. Hence Paul describes it as *“the ministry of reconciliation.”*

Essential to the enjoyment of the reconciliation is doctrine of Justification. God is righteous, sinners are un-righteous. The Pastor faithfully preaching the gospel will seek to show that whilst it is impossible for sinful man to be righteous, in and of himself, God himself freely provides this through faith in His Son Jesus Christ. This forms the heart of Paul’s letter to the Romans, *“But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is*

³³³ Romans 3:23-25 ESV

³³⁴ John 14:6 ESV

³³⁵ Acts 4:12 ESV

³³⁶ Acts 2:38 ESV

³³⁷ John 12:32 ESV

³³⁸ 2 Corinthians 5:18-21 ESV

³³⁹ BDAG

no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”³⁴⁰

Perhaps the most succinct definition of Justification is found in the Westminster Shorter Catechism Q33 *What is justification? A. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.* The faithful Pastor in his preaching we seek to underline this most comforting truth to those who hear him. God has imputed (reckoned or credited) all our the sins of the believer to His son, Jesus Christ, and imputes (reckons or credits) all the righteousness of His Son Jesus Christ to the believer. *“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”*

Flowing from these foundation gospel realities, the Pastor in his preaching will seek to expound and apply the further blessings, such as: the believers deliverance from condemnation,³⁴¹ their adoption and their belonging to the people of God,³⁴² the believers' membership of God's kingdom,³⁴³ their reception of the gift of the Holy Spirit,³⁴⁴ their present possession of eternal life,³⁴⁵ and their sure and certain hope of the resurrection of the body.³⁴⁶

Having outlined the need for the Gospel and presented the blessings offered in the Gospel the faithful Pastor in his preaching, will need to explain the response God requires to the gospel. This response is confirmed for us on numerous occasions in the New Testament. Whether it was on the Day of Pentecost when the crowds cried out, *“Brothers, what shall we do?”*,³⁴⁷ or answering the Philippian jailer who asked, *“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”*³⁴⁸, the apostles were careful to give a clear response. In answer to the crowds' question, they replied, *“Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”*³⁴⁹ To the Philippian jailer they said, *“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.”*³⁵⁰

In the ministry of Jesus we see the Lord allowing none to adopt an easy-believer response to His Ministry. He urged those who would follow him to count the cost in doing so,³⁵¹ to two enthusiastic would-be follower Jesus challenged the reality and wholeheartedness of their commitment,³⁵² and set the highest standard for commitment to discipleship in saying, *“If anyone would come after me, let him*

³⁴⁰ Romans 3:21-26 ESV

³⁴¹ John 3:18; Romans 8:1; 1 Corinthians 11:32

³⁴² Acts 2:41, 47; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 6:1-2; 16:1, 15; 1 Peter 2:4-10

³⁴³ 1 Corinthians 6:10; Ephesians 2:19-22; Colossians 1:13

³⁴⁴ Acts 2:38; 1 Corinthians 2:12; 6:19

³⁴⁵ John 3:16; 11:25-26

³⁴⁶ 1 Corinthians 6:14; 15:12-57

³⁴⁷ Acts 2:37 ESV

³⁴⁸ Acts 16:30 ESV

³⁴⁹ Acts 2:38-39 ESV

³⁵⁰ Acts 16:31 ESV

³⁵¹ Luke 14:28

³⁵² Matthew 8:18-22

deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”³⁵³ Repentance and faith need repeated explanation. Pastors are not to be afraid of explaining the rigors of Christian discipleship for fear of making the message unattractive. Those who sincerely seek Christ will find their resolve to follow Him deepened.

THE PREACHER MUST BE HIMSELF

Models and examples in life are helpful. We learn by example in many areas of life. We adopt the characteristics of those we admire. In preaching we find many helpful models and examples, but unlike many other areas of life, the Pastor, whilst learning from others, is to strive to be himself. The Pastor must recognize that the Lord has gifted him with his own distinctive personality and gifts to communicate the truth of His Word. This is not to say that the Pastor does not grow and develop in gifts and mannerisms, He does. It is helpful to receive critical feedback from others; other Pastors, our Elders, and importantly our wives.

In his entire preaching ministry, the Pastor is dependent upon the Holy Spirit. Jesus exhorted his disciples to abide in him as the branches of a vine telling them, *“As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”*³⁵⁴ As Prime & Begg say, “Like frail sailing craft with their sails, we are helpless without the wind of the Spirit. No matter how well we have prepared and equipped ourselves, our words fall to the ground apart from the gracious unction that the Lord Jesus, the Head of the church, gives by the Spirit. Every time we genuinely minister in His name, His hand is upon us, and His Spirit is with our lips as we speak from His Word.”³⁵⁵

³⁵³ Matthew 16:24 ESV

³⁵⁴ John 15:4-5 ESV

³⁵⁵ Prime, Begg, p.146-147

Lecture Six Questions

1. How important was preaching in the ministry of Jesus?
2. What was Paul's final charge to Timothy?
3. What is the Pastor's obligation in preaching?
4. How may the relation between teaching and preaching be understood?
5. Why is it important for Pastor's to compliment their scriptural knowledge with theological understanding?
6. What is the benefit of systematic expositional preaching?
7. What does Evangelistic preaching involve?
8. What is the goal of the Pastor in Evangelistic preaching?
9. What blessings that flow from the gospel should the Pastor preach?
10. What must the Pastor recognise in his approach to preaching?

LECTURE SEVEN: PASTORAL PRACTISE

In his first letter the Apostle Peter calls upon the Elders amongst those to whom he writes, “*shepherd the flock of God that is among you.*”³⁵⁶ As we have seen, the Pastor’s role extends beyond the hours of personal study and preparation for his public pulpit ministry. It involves a personal involvement with the lives of those he is called to shepherd.

Pastoral care can be defined as the practical, specific and spiritual care of members of Christ’s church by those appointed as overseers. This practical, specific and spiritual care occurs alongside and connected with the public preaching and teaching of God’s Word. In spite of differences in temperament and gifting, every Pastor should seek with the help of the Holy Spirit to be as effective as he can in both areas.

With the many and varied calls upon time and resources in modern ministry, it can be easy for Pastoral Care to become neglected. However, public preaching and private pastoral care must not be separated. It is through the private pastoral involvement with the lives of his people that the Pastor discovers the spiritual state of his flock. It is through this vital aspect of ministry that he discerns how his congregation is applying the Word of God to their lives as they face everyday problems and temptations. As a result of pastoral care the faithful pastor can apply God’s word in a more effective and deeper way.

From an earlier lecture we note the goals of pastoral care, namely: the feeding of the flock, the proclaiming of the whole counsel of God, the presenting of every believer perfect in Christ and the preparing of all God’s people for works of service. Pastoral visitation will be kept from being merely social calls as these goals are kept in mind.

THE EXERCISE OF PASTORAL CARE

The exercising of Pastoral Care within a congregation needs to be systematic. Within the shared responsibility of the Elders it is necessary to have a well-considered strategy to fulfill the task of shepherding the sheep. Depending on the size of the congregation and the numbers of Elders, it may be planned to visit each family in their home once or twice a year.

When the prophet Isaiah describes the Messiah and His flock, he writes: “*He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.*”³⁵⁷ This description of the care the Messiah has for his people gives Pastors a pattern of care for the varying situations they will encounter within the congregation: Some are lambs, some have obligations for the young, and others are burdened, needing sensitive care.

In the exercising of pastoral care the Pastor is seek to apply spiritual insight to assess the condition of those he ministers to in order to relate the Scriptures to the individual situations of the members of the flock. To do so, the Pastor needs knowledge of the Scriptures, discernment to enable proper diagnosis, and skill to make appropriate application of God’s Word suitable to the situation. This need reminds us that the Pastor’s daily study of the Scriptures not only feeds his own soul and contributes to the public teaching and preaching of the Word of God, but also its application in the work of pastoral care. Pastors are to cultivate the gift of listening to the members in order to understand their particular circumstances and spiritual needs, but the Pastor is also to be ready to be directive in applying the

³⁵⁶ 1 Peter 5:2 ESV

³⁵⁷ Isaiah 40:11 ESV

Scriptures to encourage, exhort, admonish and counsel members to live their lives in accordance with the teaching of Scripture.

Two Greek words used often and translated by “encourage,” are παρακαλέω, which carries the inference of strongly urging a course of action and παραμυθέομαι, which means to comfort, console or exercise a gentle influence by words. παρακαλέω is used, for example, by Paul in statement, “*Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.*”³⁵⁸ The same verb is translated “urge” in a later verse when he writes, “*And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.*”³⁵⁹ However, we can see that παραμυθέομαι, translated as “encourage” carries a gentler meaning of comfort and consoling when it comes to those who are “fainthearted”.

All Christians need encouragement in both senses of these words. Pastors seek to urge Christians to persevere in godliness or to develop their spiritual gifts and to discover their proper place in the body of Christ. Pastors also need to comfort, console and exercise gentle influence in the lives of other Christians by the application of the Word. Pastors, following Paul’s teaching, are to make it their aim to encourage the people of God.

Paul instructs Timothy, “*Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.*”³⁶⁰ The word for “exhortation” is παράκλησις which has been defined as “act of emboldening another in belief or course of action.”³⁶¹ An exhortation is more directive than an encouragement: it tells Christians what they should be doing. Paul exhorts the Galatians, “*So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.*”³⁶² Here, the apostle is calling for a particular action “*to do good to everyone.*” Again, we can see this aspect of exhortation in Paul’s urging the Philippians, “*Rejoice in the Lord always.*”³⁶³ Here the apostle is directing his hearers, “Rejoice”! In their interaction with the Lord’s people, Pastors need to give directives as they seek to apply God’s Word. Husbands are exhorted “*love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her*”³⁶⁴; wives are called to “*submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord*”³⁶⁵; and children “*obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.*”³⁶⁶

Zugg writes, “It is the pastor’s responsibility to explain, exhort, encourage, and persuade the flock. Exhortation includes warning the people against error (in doctrine and morals) coupled with the duty to give advice and encouragement (*cp. Heb. 13:22*).”³⁶⁷

Along with encouragement and exhortation, the exercising of Pastoral Care includes Admonition. Paul writes to the Thessalonians, “*We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you.*”³⁶⁸ Admonishing is part of Pastoral Care. The Greek is νοουθετέω,

³⁵⁸ 1 Thessalonians 5:11 ESV

³⁵⁹ 1 Thessalonians 5:14 ESV

³⁶⁰ 1 Timothy 4:13 ESV

³⁶¹ BDAG Electronic Version

³⁶² Galatians 6:10 ESV

³⁶³ Philippians 4:4 ESV

³⁶⁴ Ephesians 5:25 ESV

³⁶⁵ Ephesians 5:22 ESV

³⁶⁶ Ephesians 6:1 ESV

³⁶⁷ Zugg, p.72

³⁶⁸ 1 Thessalonians 5:12 ESV

which carries the meaning of giving counsel to avoid or cease improper conduct.³⁶⁹ Both in his public and private ministry, the Pastor is to admonish the people of God against dangerous belief and practice. The apostle John admonishes his readers in the last words of his first letter, “*Little children, keep yourselves from idols.*”³⁷⁰ Paul admonishes the Ephesian Elders to keep watch for the health of the church, “*I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert.*”³⁷¹

Counseling refers to the activity in which the Lord’s people are to be encouraged, exhorted or admonished. Pastors engage in counseling whenever people ask for advice: as much in casual exchanges after meetings as on occasions when people make an appointment to see them. Whether visiting a person who is unwell or giving guidance to one who is struggling with a problem or an issue, Pastors engage in counseling that may involve giving encouragement, exhortation or admonition, and or combinations of all three.

In a contemporary scene where there is a increasing emphasis being given to para-church counseling organizations, it is important to remember that the public preaching of the Word of God is the primary means by which the Pastor carries out his care for the flock. In His High-Priestly Prayer, Jesus asked the father concerning His church, “*Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.*”³⁷² Carson comments, “This can only mean that the means Jesus expects his Father to use as he sanctifies his Son’s followers is *the truth*. The Father will immerse Jesus’ followers in the revelation of himself in his Son; he will sanctify them by sending the Paraclete to guide them into all truth (15:13). Jesus’ followers will be ‘set apart’ from the world, reserved for God’s service, insofar as they think and live in conformity with the truth, the ‘word’ of revelation (v. 6) supremely mediated through Christ (himself the truth, 14:6, and the Word incarnate, 1:1, 14)—the revelation now embodied in the pages of this book.”³⁷³ Or again, Milne writes, “The means of their sanctification, no less than the means of their protection, is the Word of God.”³⁷⁴

As the Pastor faithfully expounds the Word of God in the course of his public ministry, the Holy Spirit, the Counselor *par excellence* applies the truth of God’s Word to the varied needs of His people. At one and the same time the contents of a sermon may be the means of encouragement to one, an exhortation to another, or a challenge of admonition to others. Often private counseling of an individual follows preaching where the Holy Spirit has applied the Word to given situations in the life of the believer.

The Pastor’s primary focus in shepherding the flock is to help Christians understand God’s purposes in their situations and respond appropriately in accordance with God’s Word. At times this purpose will necessitate difficult as well as encouraging conversations. The Pastor must not shrink back from such times, remembering that his goal in fulfilling his calling as a shepherd is not the pleasure of the people we endeavor to help, but pleasing God. In speaking the truth in love and with a clear conscience, Pastors should not be afraid to encourage the people to prayerfully consider any counsel given. Paul could urge the Corinthians “*I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say.*”³⁷⁵ In this way Pastors express the apostolic refusal to “*practice cunning or to tamper with God’s word, but by the*

³⁶⁹ BDAG

³⁷⁰ 1 John 5:21 ESV

³⁷¹ Acts 20:29-31 ESV

³⁷² John 17:17 ESV

³⁷³ Carson, D. A., p. 566

³⁷⁴ Milne, B., p. 246.

³⁷⁵ 1 Corinthians 10:15 ESV

*open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.*³⁷⁶ The Pastor seek not to be domineering over those in his charge³⁷⁷, but rather as those answerable to God, present the truth of God's Word to His people.

PASTORAL LIMITATIONS

All Pastors recognize that in and of themselves they are out of their depths in ministering to God's people. With Paul, Pastors acknowledge, "*Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant.*"³⁷⁸ Therefore the Pastor's confidence as a shepherd must never rest in his Seminary training, qualifications or past experience, but in the Lord who delights to use frail broken instruments to minister to His people so that their "*faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*"³⁷⁹ Hence, all Pastoral ministry is borne out of a sense of dependence upon God for without the enabling grace of God no encouragement, exhortation, admonition, or spiritual counsel will have no lasting benefit.

The Pastor must also discern when the problem is not spiritual but rather physical or psychological. Pastors must learn to recognize the stage at which they may need to encourage the person being counseled to pursue such help. There are many resources to help Pastor's recognize such needs and, having recognized that a person's problem may not be wholly spiritual, he must consider other possibilities and not be slow in recommending the person to speak with their doctor.

In dealing with Christians in the midst of struggles and temptations, the Pastor ought not only to show sympathy in encouraging, exhorting, admonishing and counseling, but also show empathy. Whilst Pastor need to be wary of parading weaknesses, in certain circumstances it can be extremely helpful for Christians to know that those who have care of their souls face similar struggles. This personal openness with the Lord's people is often found within the apostolic letters. Paul could write to the Philippians, "*Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*"³⁸⁰

On these verses Alec Motyer comments, "Paul has not spoken of himself out of a spirit of display but to provide a guide to the church and a standard of Christian living to which he does not hesitate to call other Christians. It is instructive to see here in Paul's experience a harmony often lacking in ours: the confidence of the leader and the companionship of the brother. Paul does not hesitate to put himself 'out front'. It is part of his calling as an apostle to give a lead to the church and he has a sturdy confidence that the life he has been enabled to live is not only exemplary but normative. Yet at the same time he speaks as a brother to *brethren* (verse 13) and with gentle grace allows the *I* of verses 13–14 to become the *us* of verse 15. We could not have a better illustration of . . . companionate leadership."³⁸¹

This attitude of treating those we minister to as equal companions in the Christian life enables believers to be aware that their Pastors are not supermen but fellow strugglers, and are able to minister to them

³⁷⁶ 2 Corinthians 4:2 ESV

³⁷⁷ 1 Peter 5:3 ESV

³⁷⁸ 2 Corinthians 3:5-6 ESV

³⁷⁹ 1 Corinthians 2:5 ESV

³⁸⁰ Philippians 3:13-14 ESV

³⁸¹ Motyer, J. A. p. 174.

out of a shared experience of inherent weakness and the sustaining grace of God. How encouraging is it for Christians to know that their Great High Priest is able to sympathize with their weaknesses seeing that in every respect He was tempted as they are, yet without sin. So it is encouraging to know that Pastors and Elders likewise have known what they are going through.

Although every Pastor will at times feel out of his depth in seeking to address a situation in the life of a believer, he is to remember the source of his sufficiency; that it is from God. The Pastor also needs to remember when dealing with those who are the Lord's people, that he has a hidden ally; the Holy Spirit who indwells all believers. The Pastor's confidence when seeking to deal faithfully with a child of God lays in the presence and the ministry of the Holy Spirit to sanctify the Word to their hearts.

Paul writes to the Thessalonians, *"the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one. And we have confidence in the Lord about you, that you are doing and will do the things that we command. May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ."*³⁸² As Stott writes, the Pastors confidence is found in this profound truth, "behind the word of the Lord is the faithfulness of the Lord. It is he who spoke the word in the first place and who speaks it still, who confirms its truth in human hearts, and who causes it to take root and bear fruit. He also stands faithfully by his covenant people, promising that he will never leave or forsake them."³⁸³ Without that confidence Pastors would despair; with that confidence Pastors are enabled to fulfill any pastoral obligation.

PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES OF PASTORAL CARE

As a general rule, Pastors should seek to avoid even the appearance of evil when visiting those in their care. Where possible the Pastor should seek to avoid meeting with the opposite sex on their own. Whilst this is not the highest practical principle of Pastoral Care, it is important. Many a Pastor has made shipwreck of his faith and brought pain and scandal upon himself, his family and the church through not heeding this concern. In this sensitive area Pastors need to heed Paul's warning to the Corinthians, *"Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall."*³⁸⁴

This is not to say that there can never be occasions when a Pastor can meet with a woman on a one to one basis. However, these should be the exception and not the rule. If such meetings are necessary then they should be arranged in an open area where other people are present: in the home with the Pastor's wife present, or in the church building when someone else is in the nearby vicinity. Often such meetings may be arranged at short notice in response to a pressing felt need. Subsequent meetings should be arranged with another woman present.

A helpful principle in this regard is "if in doubt about the wisdom of counseling someone, do not, but pass it on to someone else. A danger of sustained one-to-one counseling is that the person counseled can become too dependent upon the counselor, especially if of the opposite sex and for this reason, among others, long-term counseling should be with those of the same sex."³⁸⁵

A pastoral visit is more than a "social call". The purpose of Pastoral visitation is to encourage, exhort, admonish or counsel. However, a pastoral visit is a "social call" in that Pastor is to care for the people as people, their families, their concerns and interests. The more he gets to know his people, the more

³⁸² 2 Thessalonians 3:3-5 ESV

³⁸³ Stott, J. R. W. p. 188.

³⁸⁴ 1 Corinthians 10:12 ESV

³⁸⁵ Prime, Begg, p. 154

the Pastor will know the best approach to take to any visit. In visiting people the Pastor should always go prepared to speak of spiritual things, and with the deliberate intention of doing so. The Pastor's visit should contribute something to the spiritual well being of those he visits.

During a pastoral visit various subjects may be raised or discussed. The Pastor's aim should be to raise any discussion to the highest level, and whenever we can, to relate it to the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is a pattern that is found in Paul's letters. In urging the believers in Philippi to be humble and of one mind together, putting the needs of others before their own, Paul does not hesitate to exhort them to Christ-mindedness: "*Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.*"³⁸⁶ Says Ellsworth, "Paul didn't have to look far for this kind of proof. It was readily available in the example of the Lord Jesus Christ . . . The Philippians are again to focus their attention on Christ, not out of mere academic or theoretical interest, but with a view to emulating his example."³⁸⁷

Explaining how marriage looks within the new society that God has created in Christ, Paul relates the relationship of husband and wife to that of Christ and the church. "*This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.*"³⁸⁸ The call for the wife to submit to the husband is not based on some misogynistic view of human relationships, but rather as a picture of the relationship of the church to Christ: "*Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.*"³⁸⁹ Similarly, the standard for the husbands relationship to his wife is that of Christ to the church, "*Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives.*"³⁹⁰ Within the person and work of Christ in relationship to the church, the Pastor has all he needs to address Christian marriages.

VISITING THE SICK

Visiting those who are sick is one of the priorities and privileges for the Pastor in the exercising of pastoral care. Rarely will a Pastor experience a greater spiritual intimacy with his people than when they are facing issues that have suddenly made their future uncertain as far as their health is concerned. It is important for the Pastor to be available and prepared to visit as soon as possible. This will not just give reassurance to the one suffering and show the immediacy of the Pastor's care, but it will help the Pastor to gauge the seriousness of the condition for planning future visitation.

Pastors have to be particularly discerning when a person is seriously ill. At such times a short visit will suffice to allow for an appropriate verse of Scripture to be shared and a short prayer for God's help for the patient and His blessing upon those close to him or her. If the Christian is stronger, the Pastor must still be discerning as to how long to visit so as not to weary the patient who will generally be too courteous to say so.

³⁸⁶ Philippians 2:5 ESV

³⁸⁷ Ellsworth, R. p. 37.

³⁸⁸ Ephesians 5:32 ESV

³⁸⁹ Ephesians 5:22-24 ESV

³⁹⁰ Ephesians 5:25-28 ESV

Pastoral care for the sick must be scripturally focused. Whilst there may be all manner of practical counseling a Pastor can give, if his care is devoid of the hope of the gospel and the promises of God found in His Word, any hope or encouragement he may offer will be little more than an illusion.

On such visits, if time and circumstances allow, it is helpful for the Pastor to ask about the person's condition and treatment, and how they are being cared for. It is helpful to ask about the family, so that specific prayer can be offered. Importantly, the Pastor needs to ask the person how they relate their situation to the relationship with God. Depending on the nature of the condition, the most important question to ask is whether the person is ready to die and stand before God. These questions naturally lead to an opportunity to present the Gospel, to talk about God and the hope Christians have in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In preparation for what will be a major aspect of his ministry, the Pastor is to meditate and study key Scriptural passages that are encouraging to such a person. It can be helpful to categorize them in such a way as:

- Comforting Passages: Psalms 23; 28; 34; 46; 62; 145; Hebrews 4:14-16
- Gospel Summaries: John 11:25-26; Romans 5:6-11; 2 Corinthians 5: 17-21; Ephesians 2:1-10
- Passages dealing with the purposes of Suffering: 2 Corinthians 12:7-9; James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:6-7; 4:12-19
- Passages pointing to Eternity with Christ: John 10:27-30; 14:1-3; Philippians 1:21-23; 1 Peter 1:3-5³⁹¹

Most people whom a Pastor visits will receive the offer to pray for them. Asking the person he is visiting, "How would you like me to pray for you?" makes it easier for both the Pastor to pray intentionally and for them to share their anxieties or fears.

Croft gives Pastors a helpful checklist for Pastors visiting the Sick

Theological

- Ask leading questions
- Read scripture
- Pray the Gospel
- Affirm the promises and attributes of God
- Trust God's sovereign plan

Pastoral

- Prepare your heart
- Watch your time
- Listen; don't solve
- Leave a note when necessary
- Enjoy the moment

Practical

- Make eye contact
- Touch with discernment

³⁹¹ There are many helpful suggestions of passages for individual circumstances, these were gleaned from Croft, "Visit the Sick"

- ❑ Be pleasant
- ❑ Be perceptive
- ❑ Freshen your breath³⁹²

Sometimes, a Pastor will leave a person who is sick feeling that his visit and ministry has seemingly been of little effect and benefit. At such times the Pastor is to trust the Lord who has promised to bless His word and sanctify trials to the spiritual good of His people.

ORGANIZING PASTORAL CARE

It needs to be remembered that while effective pastoral care requires a degree of organization, often the most beneficial exercising of pastoral care is spontaneous and seemingly casual. However, to properly care for the local congregation pastoral care requires organization. The larger the congregation, the more the regular pastoral care and visitation needs to be shared between those who are ordained/set aside for eldership or the diaconate. In seeking to structure an effective system for the comprehensive provision of pastoral care for the congregation it needs to be remembered that it is not quantity that counts, but quality. Pastoral care takes time: time to be with people, to listen to people, to get to know people.

The practical care of the Pastor for the people reveals the concerns of his heart. Paul could write to the Colossian believers, *“I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”*³⁹³ Concerning this “struggle” of the apostle, Lucas says, “He tells the Colossians that he wants them to be aware of his personal interest in them, and the joy their stability gives him. He wants them to know that he is actively concerned for them. And not just for them, but for the other Christian communities of the Lycus valley, especially the church at Laodicea, for similar perils threaten them all.”³⁹⁴ McNaughton adds, “Thus we see what the apostle was feeling and experiencing while serving the churches. It reveals Paul’s warm pastoral spirit, deep pastoral care, sincere pastoral commitment and constant pastoral conflict for the churches of Christ.”³⁹⁵

To the Corinthians, having listed the sufferings he has endured as an apostle, Paul writes, *“And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.”*³⁹⁶ Says Barnett, “We can be certain that the presence of false teachers in the Corinthian church had caused Paul considerable anxiety for the well-being of vulnerable new Christians. Here is an insight into the deep pastoral concern of Paul for the churches. As one who confessed to being *weak* he stands with the *weak* or ‘vulnerable’ new believers. He *inwardly burns* at the prospect of such Christians falling away from Christ. We are reminded how Christ who called himself ‘gentle and humble’ identified with and ministered to the little ones and the children.”³⁹⁷ This reminds us that the work of the Pastor is the work of an under-shepherd, which is to reflect and express the care and concern of the Great Shepherd of the Sheep.

³⁹² *ibid.*

³⁹³ Colossians 2:1-3 ESV

³⁹⁴ Lucas, R. C. p. 82

³⁹⁵ McNaughton, I. S. p. 37

³⁹⁶ 2 Corinthians 11:28 ESV

³⁹⁷ Barnett, P. p. 174

PASTOR'S NEED PASTORAL CARE

In seeking to fulfill his ministry, the Pastor can become so overwhelmed with the concern for the well-being of the people over whom the Lord has placed him, that he neglects his own spiritual well-being. "Who pastors the Pastors?" is a question often asked. The simple answer is. "The Lord Jesus". He is the Great Shepherd. We have already considered the Pastor's devotional life. This is a primary means by which the Pastor cares for his own soul.

But this is not the only means the Lord has given to his Pastors. Just as the local church seeks to care for its local members, so the regional church needs to care for those who minister. In a denominational structure this care is provided through a regional Presbytery for example. Independent churches will have retired men who will be asked to act in a Pastoral capacity for local Pastors.

A local Ministerial Fraternal are often a source of support and care for Pastors, where personal struggles and concerns can be shared, prayed over and advice given. However, the pastoral accountability that exists with a parity of Elders within the local church should be prime source of care for the Pastor.

Whilst the Pastor is to give himself diligently to the task of shepherding the flock, he must take care of himself spiritually, physically and psychologically. Whilst every Pastor should desire to "Spend and be spent" for the cause of Christ and the care of His people, many a ministry has ended early through physical, psychological or spiritual burnout.

Lecture Seven Questions

1. Why should public preaching and pastoral care not be separated?
2. In what two ways do Christians need to be encouraged?
3. Why is the public preaching of the Word the primary means by which the Pastor carries out his care for the flock?
4. Why is it important for a Pastor to show empathy?
5. Where does a Pastor's confidence lay in counselling?
6. What practical matters should a Pastor consider when counselling a person of the opposite sex?
7. What kind of questions should the Pastor be focussing on when visiting the sick?
8. What needs to be remembered when structuring Pastoral visitation in the Congregation?
9. What peril do Pastors face in caring for others?
10. What is the primary care structure for Pastors in the church?

LECTURE EIGHT: PASTORAL SORROWS & JOYS

The work of the Pastor is a glorious work, but it is also a work that is beset with difficulties, tensions and obstacles. These need to be balanced by an appreciation of the privileges of ministry. In this lecture we will consider some common jeopardies and joys that are inherent in Pastoral ministry.

THE DUTIES OF THE PASTOR

Paul instructed Timothy, “*fulfill your ministry.*”³⁹⁸ The word for fulfill (πληροφορέω plērophoreō) means to carry out fully, or to discharge completely. The duties a pastor is to carry out to “fulfill” his ministry are varied. That variety is at one and the same time one of the difficulties of the Pastoral ministry as well as one of its joys. Along with the preaching and teaching of God’s Word, the administering of the Sacraments, and the Pastoral care of the flock there are numerous other calls upon time and energy. The Pastor can move from counseling a young couple preparing for marriage to counseling others with the aim of preventing divorce. He can be involved with rejoicing at the birth of a child and the preparation of a funeral. The Pastor will be involved in Elder’s meetings and wider denominational or Fellowship meetings in between addressing children at schools or colleges. When seeking to relax or minister to his own family the telephone calls, emails, post or unannounced visits constantly have to be taken, replied to or received.

The Pastor’s primary focus is to give adequate time and energy to “Prayer and the Ministry of the Word.”³⁹⁹ In writing to Timothy, the apostle Paul urges him, “*Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.*”⁴⁰⁰ Zugg writes, “Timothy’s life was to be centered on God’s Word, and the ministering of that Word to the congregation through reading, exhortation, and teaching. This is one of the central texts that explain the work of the teaching elder/pastor/minister as well as the centrality of the Word of God in ministry.”⁴⁰¹

The pressures attendant with the variety of duties within the modern pastorate can easily squeeze personal devotion and sermon preparation. There are many activities Pastors can feel are important for the work of the church, but the most important is this devotion to prayer and the ministry of the Word. Discipline is required to structure the day. Many Pastors use the following basic structure to their days:

- Mornings kept free for study and preparation
- Afternoons devoted to Pastoral visits – either in the home, at the church or hospital visitation
- Evenings for Church meetings.

Whilst seek to avoid having a legalistic approach to such a structure, bearing in mind that emergencies rarely conform to our timetables and avoiding too many outside commitments, such a structure should enable the Pastor to keep on top of most of his duties.

Often difficulties and tensions arise in pastoral Ministry as a result of misconceptions of the task. At one extreme is the misconception that the Pastor only works a few hours on the Lord’s Day. At the other extreme is that the Pastor’s work involves everything to do with the church’s upkeep. Too often the Pastor is viewed as the Coach of a sporting Team. If the team is ‘successful’ he is commended, but if the team are ‘unsuccessful’ then he should be replaced!

³⁹⁸ 2 Timothy 4:6-5 ESV

³⁹⁹ Acts 6:4

⁴⁰⁰ 1 Timothy 4:13 ESV

⁴⁰¹ Zugg, p.72

Pastors are called to minister as Servants of Christ and his church, irrespective of what some may think. In writing to the Corinthians, Paul says, “*This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.*”⁴⁰² Says Prior, “The word for *servants* is unusual, literally meaning an under-rower, *i.e.* someone who is simply responding to higher authority and doing his job. This authority is that of Jesus Christ. The second word, *stewards*, is fairly common in the New Testament. The Greek *oikonomos* was a housekeeper or overseer (often a slave), charged with providing the establishment of a large estate with food and all things needful. He was responsible, not to his fellows, but to his lord. He was not expected to exercise his own initiative, still less his own personal authority. He simply did his master’s bidding and looked after his affairs.”⁴⁰³

Here Paul draws the balance of the Pastoral Ministry. The Pastor is to be a Servant of the Lord who administers the things of the Lord to the Lord’s people. Whilst he has no authority to “lord it over” the congregation, neither is he to be covered by a fear of their disapproval. To the Galatians Paul could write, “*For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.*”⁴⁰⁴ Stott comments, “It seems that his detractors had accused him of being a time-server, a man-pleaser, who suited his message to his audience. But is this outspoken condemnation of the false teachers the language of a man-pleaser? On the contrary, no man can serve two masters. And since Paul is first and foremost a servant of Jesus Christ, his ambition is to please Christ, not men.”⁴⁰⁵

Preaching on 1 Corinthians 4:1, Charles Simeon began, “The ministers of Christ are generally unduly exalted or undeservedly depreciated, by those around them; but they should discharge their duties with fidelity, without any regard to the opinions of men, and approve themselves to him who will judge them righteously in the last day.”⁴⁰⁶

WHO IS SUFFICIENT FOR THESE THINGS?

The complexity of the Pastoral Ministry is compounded by the deep social and moral problems in our contemporary society. The 21st Century Pastor deals with the same problems as Paul in 1st Century Corinth. To the disparate factions in the church Paul writes, “*Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*”⁴⁰⁷ It is to such a contemporary scene that the Church is called to minister. Those who take that calling seriously will have to deal with the realities of a broken society. Just in the area of Marriage, a pastor could spend most of his time engaged in marriage counseling. This is where godly Elders and gifted members of the congregation who have been equipped “for the work of ministry”⁴⁰⁸ can undertake care for those who require such ministry. Pastors can exhaust themselves through involvement where others can minister with the result that the primary Pastoral task is neglected.

⁴⁰² 1 Corinthians 4:1 ESV

⁴⁰³ Prior, D. p. 62

⁴⁰⁴ Galatians 1:10 ESV

⁴⁰⁵ Stott, J. R. W. p. 25

⁴⁰⁶ Prime & Begg, p. 294

⁴⁰⁷ 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 ESV

⁴⁰⁸ Ephesians 4:12 ESV

How thin would the New Testament be were it not for the problems experienced in the church. The contents of the New Testament Epistles reveal to us one of the most pressing and stressful elements of Pastoral Ministry: that of keeping people together.

In Ephesians 4 Paul applies the doctrine of the first 3 chapters to his readers by calling them “*to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*”⁴⁰⁹ One of the glories of the purpose of God in the gospel is the creation of a new society of formerly alienated people. The church comprises people for differing backgrounds, race and gender, all at different stages of Christian growth and theological understanding. Maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace is frequently a difficult task. While Christians are united in the essentials of the gospel, there are many secondary issues over which people will have opposite views.

Although there is a core set of Biblical truth essential to Christian Faith, sincere Christians differ over their understanding of the Sacraments, Church government, the shape and content of worship, Sabbath observance, translations of Scripture, Gifts of the Spirit. It has to be noted that often culture and personal background will dictate varying opinions or prejudices. Christians may agree that evangelism is essential to the ministry of the local church, but there may be strong differences of opinion over forms of evangelism and the methods employed.

Language can also be misunderstood and become the source of divisions. Words and phrases like Calvinism and Arminianism, or the sovereignty of God and free will, can cause suspicion and disagreement; or convictions concerning church government and the place of elders and deacons may threaten to divide people. Phrases such as “reformed” and “charismatic” lead people to divide without thinking through individual issues as they arise.

Pastors not only have to understand all these issues, and more besides, but through the ministry of the Word they are to seek to foster that maintenance of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Paul instructs Timothy, “*And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness.*”⁴¹⁰ Concerning this aspect of Ministry, Stott comments, “His instruction will sometimes have to be negative as well as positive. That is to say, he is called not only to teach the truth to the people committed to his care, but also to correct error. He must not shrink from ‘correcting his opponents’ . . . But in all his ministry, instructing and correcting alike, he will exhibit the same distinctive quality. He ‘must not be quarrelsome’. Instead, he will be ‘kindly to everyone . . . forbearing’ and characterized by ‘gentleness’. The first word (*ēpios*) means ‘mild’ and is used by Paul to describe the attitude of ‘a nurse taking care of her children’ (1 Thes. 2:7). The second word (*anexikakos*) means literally ‘bearing evil without resentment’ and so forbearing of people’s unkindness, patient towards their foolishness and tolerant of their foibles. The last word of the three (*praütēs*) adds to the gentleness portrayed by the other two the notes of ‘humility, courtesy, considerateness and meekness.’”⁴¹¹

Pastors are to teach and to demonstrate that matters of secondary importance should never be allowed to divide Christians, and that watchfulness against the enemy is called for whenever they are discussed. Pastors should take the lead by always asking first, “What do the Scriptures say?” If they are not dogmatic, then we should not be.

⁴⁰⁹ Ephesians 4:1-3 ESV

⁴¹⁰ 2 Timothy 2:24-25 ESV

⁴¹¹ Stott, J. R. W. pp. 77–78

TRIALS OF THE PASTOR

Contrary to the super-apostles in Corinth, the apostle Paul was candid with his sense of weakness and his struggles in the ministry. He writes, “*We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.*”⁴¹²

The Pastoral Ministry is not exempt from the trials and temptations of life. There are trials that are part of the common experience of all in a fallen world such as sadnesses, accidents and suffering, which the Lord uses to better equip His servants to comfort and encourage others. Other trials and difficulties come as a result of the demands and unrealistic expectations of others, or as a result of the Pastor being misunderstood or misrepresented. Some trials and difficulties are simply the consequence of the unceasing need of the Lord’s people to be cared for and the Pastor’s feeling overwhelmed by a seemingly never ending task.

Some trials are peculiar to the work of the Ministry: the constant availability to people, the long hours involved in ministering in sensitive situations, the sense of isolation and loneliness that comes as a result of being careful to avoid special friendships in the congregation so as to dispel any appearance of favoritism, the burden of bearing confidences and the pressure of leadership.

Summarizing Paul’s testimony in the above passage, Barnett observes, “Paul has shown clearly that ministers of God can never be proud or self-serving. Sacrifice is at the heart of the gospel and also at the heart of ministry—whether it is in evangelizing unbelievers or providing pastoral care for the flock of Christ. The service of God, where it is true to him, is never easy and is frequently painful. It will be remembered that Paul wrote, earlier, ‘Death is at work in us, but life is at work in you’ (4:12). The ‘life’, which they now enjoy in their relationship with God through Christ, has been at the expense of the ‘dying’ of Paul through whose ministry they are now reconciled to God.”⁴¹³

Writing to Timothy Paul encourages the younger Pastor to “*share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops.*”⁴¹⁴ Here Paul points Timothy, and all involved in Pastoral Ministry, to three qualities needed to persevere in the call to Pastoral work: endurance of hardship as a soldier, self-control as exemplified by athletes and patience of a Farmer. “There will be no victory for the soldier unless he gives himself to his soldiering, no wreath for the athlete unless he keeps the rules, and no harvest for the farmer unless he toils at his farming.”⁴¹⁵

⁴¹² 2 Corinthians 6:3-10 ESV

⁴¹³ Barnett, P. p. 126

⁴¹⁴ 2 Timothy 2:3-6 ESV

⁴¹⁵ Stott, J. R. W. pp. 58–59

One of the most prevalent and recurring a Pastor can experience is Discouragement. The continual involvement in the lives of people with their spiritual struggles, progress or lack of can bring both great joy and great sorrow. Paul could describe the Philippians believers as “*my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown.*”⁴¹⁶ O’Brien writes, “Before he exhorts his readers, Paul commends them in some of the most affectionate and endearing language he ever uses in his letters. In so doing he expresses his sense of closeness to them and his great affection for them . . . Here Paul, with a deep sense of gratitude, states that the Philippians are his joy.”⁴¹⁷

Yet, along with the Saviour, the Apostle knew the deep pain experienced when people choose to turn away. To the Galatians he writes, “*Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth.*”⁴¹⁸ Paul’s struggle with the change in the attitude of the Galatians towards him is highlighted by his acknowledgment in the previous verse, “*For I testify to you that, if possible, you would have gouged out your eyes and given them to me.*”⁴¹⁹ Stott comments, “The one they had received as God’s angel, as God’s Son, they now regarded as their enemy! Why? Simply because he had been telling them some painful home truths, rebuking them, scolding them, expostulating with them for deserting the gospel of grace and turning back again to bondage.”⁴²⁰ Pastors faithfully ministering the Word of God to the lives of God’s people will learn Paul’s experience.

Pastors often experience discouragement in connection with the frustration that comes from their preaching and teaching ministries. Pastor’s can be overwhelmed with a sense of laboring in vain, not seeing the fruit they expect in terms of conversions or spiritual growth, a dissatisfaction with his efforts. These trials are part and parcel of the work of the Pastor. The Pastor is called to ensure that as far as he is able he has prepared himself for the task by resting his confidence ultimately not on his efforts, as important as they are, but upon the Lord. As in the illustration of the farmer: preparation, work and effort are important, but it the Lord’s to give the increase. So Paul counsels the Galatians in the context of the Christian life, “*And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up,*”⁴²¹ also reminding the Corinthians, “*knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.*”⁴²²

FACING OPPOSITION

A particularly difficult source of discouragement comes in the context of facing opposition to the Pastor’s labours from God’s people. The church comprises recovering sinners, all at various stages of maturity and we have an enemy, Satan the accuser of the Brethren, who desires to disrupt the life and peace of the church. The Truth of the gospel divides. Jesus warned his disciples of this, “*Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother.*”⁴²³ At times the Pastor will have to challenge and correct traditions and positions within a church that are based on faulty interpretations of scripture or theology. These can be most stressful and discouraging times.

⁴¹⁶ Philippians 4:1 ESV

⁴¹⁷ O’Brien, P. T. p. 475

⁴¹⁸ Galatians 4:16 ESV

⁴¹⁹ Galatians 4:15 ESV

⁴²⁰ Stott, J. R. W. p. 115.

⁴²¹ Galatians 6:9 ESV

⁴²² 1 Corinthians 15:58 ESV

⁴²³ Matthew 10:34-35 ESV

Churches can become battlegrounds in which Pastors may be misunderstood and maligned by those who may feel their positions or reputations are threatened, and who cannot appreciate the Pastor's resolve to proclaim obedience to God's will through the scriptures, rather than to personal positions or denominational traditions. When Pastors feel the sting of such opposition, they need to remember that in this they are following in their Master's footsteps and are assured of his presence. This was Paul's testimony to Timothy when he was bereft of human support, "*But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it.*"⁴²⁴

Throughout his letters to Timothy, Paul encourages the younger Pastor in the language of the battlefield to "*wage the good warfare,*"⁴²⁵ to "*Fight the good fight of the faith,*"⁴²⁶ and to "*Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.*"⁴²⁷ The language is not hyperbole. It reminds us that the whole of the Christian life is a battle, and if that is so those who are called to be Pastor/Preachers will be in the thick of the battle. Pastors are not to be surprised as if something strange is happening. Pastors are not to flinch from the necessary battle that there is in the care of souls and the winning of the lost. As Prime and Begg remind us, "Our principal recourse must be to put on as deliberately as we can the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18), for wearing each piece we shall be able to stand successfully against every assault. Wearing the armor, we shall be able to take up the two weapons with confidence. No weapon in our hands is more powerful than the Scriptures, and no resource greater than prayer."⁴²⁸

The greatest source of consolation for the Pastor is found not in the approbation of the congregation, but in his sense of the Lord's call upon his life. In facing the discouragements and oppositions to his Ministry, Paul could write to the Corinthians, "*Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart.*"⁴²⁹ Here we see how important the sense of the call of God to the ministry is. Harris writes, "It was because Paul (and his fellow ministers) were God's honored agents in spreading the knowledge of God and in calling people to turn to the Lord of the glorious new covenant, and in particular because of the Spirit's liberating and transforming work, that Paul refused to waver in the discharge of his divine commission."⁴³⁰ The God who calls Pastors equips, strengthens and provides for Pastors.

When criticism comes the faithful Pastor will examine himself to see if there is any truth in them. If there is he will receive that criticism with thanksgiving as part of God's gracious discipline and take the appropriate action. If there is no truth in the criticism's, in accordance with the example of the Lord Jesus, he will entrust himself to Him who judges justly. If the Pastor is true to his Lord and true to his conscience then he can persevere, leaving any outcome to Him.

PASTORAL PRIDE

One particular area the pastor needs to guard himself concerns the matter of pride. By its very nature the Pastoral/Preaching ministry brings a man to a position of prominence and influence. This brings its own particular temptation toward pride. A man can become puffed up in knowledge and a sense of superiority all foreign to the calling of the Pastor, who is called to serve as we have seen from Paul's

⁴²⁴ 2 Timothy 4:17 ESV

⁴²⁵ 1 Timothy 1:19-18 ESV

⁴²⁶ 1 Timothy 6:12 ESV

⁴²⁷ 2 Timothy 2:3 ESV

⁴²⁸ Prime & Begg p. 295

⁴²⁹ 2 Corinthians 4:1 ESV

⁴³⁰ Harris, M. J. p. 322

own testimony. Indeed from Paul's epistles we can see that he took great pains to emphasize this humble opinion of himself. To the Corinthians he could write, "*But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.*"⁴³¹ The allusion to Gideon's defeat of the Midianites in Judges 7 reminds us that the means by which the surpassing power is shown to belong to God, is in the brokenness of the jars of clay! "Hughes comments that 'the immense discrepancy between the treasure and the vessel serves simply to attest that human weakness presents no barrier to the purposes of God, indeed, that God's power is made perfect in weakness'."⁴³²

Although the Apostle Paul both set the highest of examples and standards for Pastoral ministry, he was quick to acknowledge that he himself was the foremost of sinners,⁴³³ as was quick to deflect the propensity of a congregation to laud men: "*What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.*"⁴³⁴ Here Paul diffuses the personality cult controversy in Corinth, and pricks the potential conceit in Pastors, by reminding his readers that those who serve in the church are but servants who wait at tables to serve at God's instructions. Pastors obey His wishes, not their own; move at His bidding fulfilling responsibilities He has assigned. When tempted to think more highly of themselves than they ought, pastors are to seek to imitate John the Baptist, who when his disciples informed him of the popularity of Jesus reminded them of his role as a servant saying, "*He must increase, but I must decrease.*"⁴³⁵ Says Calvin, "He says that he is most willing to be reduced to nothing, so long as Christ occupies and fills the whole world with his beams. All pastors in the church should imitate John's zeal in lowering his head and shoulders so that Christ is elevated."⁴³⁶

Pastors need to guard against a worldly view of the ministry that sees differing ministries in terms of competition. How often can Pastors become envious of another's ministry that appears to be experiencing some blessing? Or how frustrated can Pastors be when those whom they consider to be less than orthodox seem to know growth? Again, the apostle Paul points us to the corrective for such attitudes, "*Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.*"⁴³⁷ What the apostle focuses on is the proclamation of Christ.

The Pastor needs to constantly remember that it is the Lord who has called him and equipped him with all that is necessary for him to faithfully pursue that calling. Faithfulness to calling, whether in Pastoring a handful or a large crowd, whether well known or unknown, is the measure of a 'successful' ministry. The goal would be to echo the words of the apostle Paul that caps his ministry, "*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.*"⁴³⁸

⁴³¹ 2 Corinthians 4:7 ESV

⁴³² Barnett, P. p. 87

⁴³³ 1 Timothy 1:15 ESV

⁴³⁴ 1 Corinthians 3:5-7 ESV

⁴³⁵ John 3:30 ESV

⁴³⁶ Calvin, J. (1994). *John* (Jn 3:30). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

⁴³⁷ Philippians 1:15-18 ESV

⁴³⁸ 2 Timothy 4:7-8 ESV

PASTORAL PRIVILEGE

We have focused on the trials of the pastoral ministry so as to reflect the realistic pattern outlined for us in Scripture of the nature of pastoral work. Such a realistic understanding of the demands of pastoral work should cause a man in that calling to humble himself in utter dependence upon the grace of God. The Pastoral Ministry has its compensations as well. To be called to be a servant of Christ and His church, to be entrusted with the spiritual care of His people and be called to proclaim and teach His Word is the highest possible calling in life.

Along with the discouragements and disappointments inherent in the ministry, the Lord sends encouraging expressions of the faithfulness and love of His people. Luke records the effect such encouragement had on the apostle Paul as he neared Rome, “*And the brothers there, when they heard about us, came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us. On seeing them, Paul thanked God and took courage.*”⁴³⁹ Calvin helpfully comments, “God did comfort Paul by the coming of the brethren who came forth to meet him, that he might the more joyfully make haste to defend the gospel. And the zeal and godly care of the brethren appeareth therein, in that they inquire for Paul’s coming, and go out to meet him . . . the brethren did, by this their dutifulness, testify their godliness toward Christ; and Paul’s desire was more inflamed, because he saw fruit prepared for his constancy . . . For so often as God showeth to his servants any fruit of their labour, he doth, as it were, prick them forward with a goad, that they may proceed more courageously in their work.”⁴⁴⁰

Paul’s own testimony of this form of encouragement is found in his second letter to Timothy, “*May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains, but when he arrived in Rome he searched for me earnestly and found me— may the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that Day! —and you well know all the service he rendered at Ephesus.*”⁴⁴¹ Says one commentator, “There are people in the church in whose company we feel drained and empty, but there are others who brace us up and come like a breath of fresh air into our lives. Onesiphorus was like that. And it seems he carried out a similar ministry of refreshment in the church at Ephesus.”⁴⁴²

The final comments come from Prime & Begg, “There are occasions, too personal and precious to share with others, when God graciously gives glimpses of what He has achieved through our ministry, and the hardships and difficulties are forgotten even as a mother forgets the travail when her child is safely born. But the best joys are in the future when we and our spiritual children will be gathered to our Lord Jesus Christ when He comes (1 Thessalonians 2:19). By God’s mercy, we shall have many surprises that will be our glory and joy (1 Thessalonians 2:20). While the world may have despised what we have done, our Lord will not do so. Every endeavor in His name will be rewarded, and we shall discover that our labor in Him has not been in vain (1 Corinthians 15:58). No stress or pressure, no tear or groan that we have borne in His name will be overlooked. We will enter into the Chief Shepherd’s joy, the joy that He set before Himself as He endured the Cross. Anything is worth enduring to share the Shepherd’s joy!”⁴⁴³

⁴³⁹ Acts 28:15 ESV

⁴⁴⁰ Calvin, J Vol. 2, p. 420

⁴⁴¹ 2 Timothy 1:16-18 ESV

⁴⁴² Williams, P. p. 35

⁴⁴³ Prime & Begg, p.310

Lecture Eight Questions

1. How do misconceptions of the Pastor's task lead to difficulties & tensions?
2. How does a pastor's sense of his calling help maintain a balanced approach to ministry?
3. What practical reason should ensure Pastors seek to utilize the gifts of others in the church?
4. What trials are peculiar to the role of the Pastor?
5. What truth does Paul's language of the battlefield used in reference to the ministry remind Pastors of?
6. What should a Pastor Do in the face of criticism?
7. How does Paul diffuse personality cults and potential conceit in Pastors?
8. How did Paul avoid the danger of either being envious of another's ministry being blessed or bring frustrated when others less orthodox seemed to be blessed?
9. What is the measure of a "successful ministry"?
10. What is the highest possible calling in life?

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Lecture One Answers

1. Paul's pastoral desire was to equip Christians to grow and stand on their own feet, not remaining spiritually immature, unhealthily dependent upon him or any other man, but stable in their life of discipleship to Jesus Christ.
2. A profound sense of wonder and gratitude for God's grace and a desire to please Him.
3. Paul has been instrumental in the spiritual birth of his younger helper and conveys his felt sense of responsibility towards him in paternal language. As his spiritual father it is fitting that he should serve as a mentor and model for his development.
4. He reminds Timothy of the prophecies that were made concerning him, the gift convey to him by prophecy when the counsel of elders laid hands on him, and the gift he had received when Paul laid hands on him.
5. Timothy's godliness was to be portrayed in the purity of his speech and life, in his diligent hard work, in his sensitive relations with others, in the avoidance of the temptations of ministry, and in his continued personal spiritual progress.
6. Both Moses and David were called from shepherding real flocks to shepherd the people of God. Moses and David are both described as shepherds. In providing shepherding care for the people of God, they were reflecting the shepherding care of the covenant Lord.
7. He himself will search for the lost sheep, care for them, feed them, and protect them. He will lead them to rest, bind up the injured, and strengthen the sick. He also reiterates that he will hold those to account who have abused his flock.
8. Those who heard him would have understood the implications of what he was claiming through the matrix of those Old Testament images and promises. Jesus was declaring himself to be the Shepherd-King who spoken of by Ezekiel and Jeremiah.
9. He describes the work of the elder/pastor as one who shepherds the flock of God, and he describes Jesus as the "Chief Shepherd" indicating that pastor/elder shepherds derive their authority from Him.
10. As shepherds of the church, Pastors and Elders have been given the authority to lead and protect the local church. This authority comes from the Lord and is to exercised in His Name and on his behalf for the well-being of the flock bought with Jesus' own blood.

Lecture Two Answers

1. The roots of the Role and Call of Ministry are found in the Old Testament calling and ministry of the Prophets. The calling of the Old Testament prophets was an irresistible call from God.
2. The inner call has to be recognised and confirmed by the church as it recognises the calling and gifts of the prospective candidate for the ministry. This outward call is pictured in the setting apart and sending of Paul and Barnabas for the Gentile mission by the Holy Spirit and the church gathered at Antioch (Acts 13:3-4).
3. The wider church, and any church the man goes on to serve, can have confidence as to the gifting and calling of that individual if the wider church has examined and approved him. The man himself having received the approval of the wider church concerning his sense of call will have a ground of encouragement through the testing times of ministry in recalling the confirmation of his sense of leading by the wider Church.
4. The Pastor or Minister is first and foremost a servant of Jesus Christ; one who seeks by God's grace to follow in the footsteps of Him who washed the feet of his disciples.

5. It is by the Word of God that the shepherd feeds the flock, presented in a balanced and spiritual manner in order that the sheep be nourished and encouraged in their walk with Christ and the growth in spiritual maturity.
6. Acts 20:28 explains why overseership is an excellent work: overseers shepherd God's Church that He purchased with His own blood.
7. Scripture says the candidate for eldership should be a "one-woman man," meaning he has an exclusive relationship with one woman. Such a man is above reproach in his sexual and marital life.
8. A Pastor, then, must be able to open his Bible and exhort and encourage others from it. He must also be able to discern false doctrine and refute it with Scripture. Therefore, pastors must be able to teach God's Word.
9. This means he must be a responsible Christian father, husband, and household manager. He must have a reputation for providing for his family, financially, emotionally, and spiritually. A well-managed family means that the children obey and submit to the father's leadership.
10. Those genuinely called to be Ministers recognise that their gifting is to be used in the service of Christ and His people, not for selfish reasons, and will desire to faithfully use that gifting to administer God's grace to His people through the ordinary Means of Grace.

Lecture Three Answers

1. They were to obey his instruction and follow his example.
2. In calling his disciples Jesus' purpose was that alongside His unique teaching, they would observe His example.
3. Speech, conduct, love, faith and purity.
4. What we say, and how we say it, reveals what we are inwardly. If Pastors are to say the right things in the right way, we must think the right things in the right way.
5. The conduct of those called to be Pastors in the church ought to reflect this goal of pursuing Christlikeness.
6. The Greek word for "hospitality" means 'a love of strangers' which implies a love for all and a willingness to open one's home to others.
7. Pastors must continually building upon the foundations of their faith, growing in knowledge and understanding of the Truth that they may rightly handle the word of truth in their preaching, teaching and counselling.
8. The ministry continually brings church leaders into sensitive and emotionally charged contact with others. This brings potential for temptation and moral failure. To guard against these dangers Pastors/Elders are to heed the warning found in Proverbs 4:23, "Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life."
9. The apostle Paul's prayers reveal his concern for his readers' spiritual growth: growth in the knowledge of God with Spiritual wisdom and understanding that is evidenced in fruitful lives to the praise of God.
10. Godliness glimmers in the righteous and glorified Son of God: manifested before men, vindicated by the Spirit of God, seen by angels, proclaimed by witnesses, believed by untold numbers, and glorified in his heavenly exaltation and session at the Father's right hand.

Lecture Four Answers

1. Paul writes that the exalted Christ bestows gifts on his church, and that their purpose is to equip God's people for their ministries and so build up Christ's body.
2. The pastor is freed from the temptation to empire build, and from the tyranny of constantly looking over his shoulder to determine what others may think of him or his message.

3. The goal of the Pastor's ministry is to "equip the saints" and to "feed the sheep" to the end that they respond with the obedience of faith.
4. As for our creed, Scripture is profitable 'for teaching the truth and refuting error'. As for our conduct, it is profitable 'for reformation of manners and discipline in right living.'
5. Pastors are faithful to God's people only as we seek to feed them with the whole counsel of God from a whole bible, both in public and from house to house.
6. The purpose of Pastoral Ministry is that those who by grace through faith are united to Jesus Christ be presented mature, having attained the stature of the fullness of Christ.
7. A Christo-centric pastoral ministry not only sees the all scripture points to and finds its fulfilment in Christ, but also recognises that pastoral ministry should always lead believers to Him and show the connection of all other aspects of Christian doctrine to His saving work and His pre-eminence in God's purposes of redemption.
8. Pastors cannot adequately care for the people of God under their charge, if they neglect the care and nurture of their own spiritual life.
9. The Pastor's motivation for having the priority of feeding the sheep, of equipping the saints and caring for the church of God, is that they were "obtained with his own blood."
10. If a man is called by God, to the office of Pastor and seeks to carry out his responsibilities with His resources, then he will be made equal to the task. "Those whom God calls, He equips - that is the testimony of the Bible, of history, and of experience"

Lecture Five Answers

1. Along with study and godly living, prayer is the primary expression of our relationship to God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
2. When Pastors themselves have a disciplined personal prayer life what they say about prayer in public will have the ring of truth about it.
3. Freed from the responsibility of caring for the needs of widows, the Apostles said, "we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."
4. Not only did He prioritize prayer, He prayed at important junctures of His ministry: He continued in prayer for a night before He chose the Twelve Disciples. Luke tells us Jesus prayed alone before asking the disciples the key question concerning their understanding of His identity. Jesus told Peter that He had prayed for him, that he would not utterly fall in the face of his severest temptation.
5. One of the dangers of pastoral ministry is to be so taken up with the legitimate spiritual needs of others that we neglect our own. Alternatively, a real danger for Pastors is that we adopt a wrong "professional" attitude that is little more than an external form of godliness that denies the power thereof.
6. Peter was to understand that his service of Jesus was to be founded not upon his strength or courage, but upon his love for Jesus. All Christian service is grounded upon, motivated and shaped by Christ's love for us and our love for him.
7. Pastors are often drained by the constant requirement to give of themselves. Essential to their being able to do so profitably is their own receiving through the Word of God and communion with their Saviour.
8. In praying in connection with preparation for preaching, Pastors remind themselves of their own inadequacies for the task of rightly dividing the word of God without the presence and enabling of the Holy Spirit to enlighten their understanding of Scripture.
9. As they consider Pastoral Visitation, Pastors need to pray for wisdom, sensitivity, and understanding that they may be able to rightly handle the word of God.

10. Paul's honest and pleas for prayer remind us that Pastors need the prayers of God's people and should not hesitate to ask for them. Paul regularly requested the prayers of his fellow believers because he understood his need of them and the effectiveness God gave to them.

Lecture Six Answers

1. A major aspect of Jesus' earthly ministry was proclamation of good news, and the subsequent gospel records show that the preaching of the Word of God was how that ministry was fulfilled. At the end of his ministry Jesus commissioned his followers to "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation."
2. I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.
3. The Pastor's obligation in preaching is to proclaim faithfully the message of the gospel, and the outcomes must be left to the work of the Holy Spirit. He is the One who will convict of sin and bring people to repentance, and he will use faithful preaching to do that.
4. The relation between these two elements may be understood in this way: First, there will be careful exposition of God's truth, so that hearers clearly understand what God says in His Word, and then there will be an appeal to men and women's hearts and wills to respond to God's truth with faith and obedience. When the two words are used together, preaching relates to the application of the Word that has been taught, since, once understood, it must be applied to our lives.
5. Pastors are to draw from the learning of the church throughout the ages, resisting the temptation to focus just on any one particular age. Having distilled the understanding of previous eras Pastors are called to preach into their contemporary age.
6. The benefit of a systematic exposition of Scripture, either through the books of the Bible or extending topics, is that a Pastor will cover subjects that otherwise might not be dealt with, but that God uses to bless people in a remarkable manner as they sit under the regular exposition of His Word.
7. Evangelistic preaching involves a faithful setting forth of the truth concerning God's holiness, man's sin, God's judgment against sin, God's provision for sinners through the Person and work of His Son Jesus Christ, and how a sinner can be saved through believing in Jesus as Lord and Saviour.
8. The goal of the Pastor in evangelistic preaching is to present a clear and accurate portrait of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. As Jesus said, "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." Evangelistic preaching is the proclaiming of glories of the once crucified and now risen and glorified Saviour.
9. Flowing from these foundation gospel realities, the Pastor in his preaching will seek to expound and apply the further blessings, such as: the believers deliverance from condemnation, their adoption and their belonging to the people of God, the believers' membership of God's kingdom, their reception of the gift of the Holy Spirit, their present possession of eternal life, and their sure and certain hope of the resurrection of the body.
10. The Pastor must recognize that the Lord has gifted him with his own distinctive personality and gifts to communicate the truth of His Word.

Lecture Seven Answers

1. It is through the private pastoral involvement with the lives of his people that the Pastor discovers the spiritual state of his flock. It is through this vital aspect of ministry that he discerns how his congregation is applying the Word of God to their lives as they face everyday

problems and temptations. As a result of pastoral care the faithful pastor can apply God's word in a more effective and deeper way.

2. Pastors seek to urge Christians to persevere in godliness or to develop their spiritual gifts and to discover their proper place in the body of Christ. Pastors also need to comfort, console and exercise gentle influence in the lives of other Christians by the application of the Word.
3. As the Pastor faithfully expounds the Word of God in the course of his public ministry, the Holy Spirit, the Counselor par excellence applies the truth of God's Word to the varied needs of His people. At one and the same time the contents of a sermon may be the means of encouragement to one, an exhortation to another, or a challenge of admonition to others.
4. Whilst Pastor need to be wary of parading weaknesses, in certain circumstances it can be extremely helpful for Christians to know that those who have care of their souls face similar struggles.
5. The Pastor's confidence when seeking to deal faithfully with a child of God lays in the presence and the ministry of the Holy Spirit to sanctify the Word to their hearts.
6. If such meetings are necessary then they should be arranged in an open area where other people are present: in the home with the Pastor's wife present, or in the church building when someone else is in the nearby vicinity. Often such meetings may be arranged at short notice in response to a pressing felt need. Subsequent meetings should be arranged with another woman present.
7. The Pastor needs to ask the person how they relate they situation to the relationship with God. Depending on the nature of the condition, the most important question to ask is whether the person is ready to die and stand before God. These questions naturally lead to an opportunity to present the Gospel, to talk about God and the hope Christians have in the Lord Jesus Christ.
8. Pastoral care takes time: time to be with people, to listen to people, to get to know people.
9. In seeking to fulfill his ministry, the Pastor can become so overwhelmed with the concern for the well-being of the people over whom the Lord has placed him, that he neglects his own spiritual well-being.
10. The pastoral accountability that exists with a parity of Elders within the local church should be prime source of care for the Pastor.

Lecture Eight Answers

1. At one extreme is the misconception that the Pastor only works a few hours on the Lord's Day. At the other extreme is that the Pastor's work involves everything to do with the church's upkeep. Too often the Pastor is viewed as the Coach of a sporting Team. If the team is 'successful' he is commended, but if the team are 'unsuccessful' then he should be replaced!
2. The Pastor is to be a Servant of the Lord who administers the things of the Lord to the Lord's people. Whilst he has no authority to "lord it over" the congregation, neither is he to be cowered by a fear of their disapproval.
3. Pastors can exhaust themselves through involvement where others can minister with the result that the primary Pastoral task is neglected.
4. The constant availability to people, the long hours involved in ministering in sensitive situations, the sense of isolation and loneliness that comes as a result of being careful to avoid special friendships in the congregation so as to dispel any appearance of favouritism, the burden of bearing confidences and the pressure of leadership.
5. It reminds Pastors that the whole of the Christian life is a battle, and if that is so those who are called to be Pastor/Preachers will be in the thick of the battle. Pastors are not to be surprised as if something strange is happening. Pastors are not to flinch from the necessary battle that there is in the care of souls and the winning of the lost.

6. When criticism comes the faithful Pastor will examine himself to see if there is any truth in them. If there is he will receive that criticism with thanksgiving as part of God's gracious discipline and take the appropriate action. If there is no truth in the criticism's, in accordance with the example of the Lord Jesus, he will entrust himself to Him who judges justly. If the Pastor is true to his Lord and true to his conscience then he can persevere, leaving any outcome to Him.
7. By reminding his readers that those who serve in the church are but servants who wait at tables to serve at God's instructions. Pastors obey His wishes, not their own; move at His bidding fulfilling responsibilities He has assigned. When tempted to think more highly of themselves than they ought, pastors are to seek to imitate John the Baptist, who when his disciples informed him of the popularity of Jesus reminded them of his role as a servant saying, "He must increase, but I must decrease."
8. He focussed on the fact that Christ is being proclaimed.
9. Faithfulness to calling, whether in Pastoring a handful or a large crowd, whether well known or unknown, is the measure of a 'successful' ministry.
10. To be called to be a servant of Christ and His church, to be entrusted with the spiritual care of His people and be called to proclaim and teach His Word is the highest possible calling in life.

Biography

Neil Stewart was born in and raised in London, UK. He was converted in 1986 at the age of 22. He studied Theology at The Evangelical Theological College of Wales and was Ordained into the Christian Ministry in 1992. During 20 years of ministry in the UK, Neil Stewart undertook further studies at Graduate and Post Graduate levels. Since 2012 Neil Stewart has been minister of Grace Covenant Church in Sheffield, Ontario and is a Minister of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

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