

“The Pastoral Office – Part 2”
Ephesians 4:11-15
(Preached at Trinity, February 8, 2015)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. After describing the wonderful unity of the church; unity that demands diligence in preserving it, Paul then turns to the great diversity God has ordained in the church. He moves from the things we share in common to those things that are distinct about us. **Ephesians 4:7 NAS** - "But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift."
2. Christ, by His Spirit, has gifted each of us differently – in different ways and in different proportions. We are united but we are not the same. Jesus sovereignly determines the particular place of each one in the church. In **Verses 8-9** we find the authority behind our Lord's determination of our gifts. He has been raised in power and glory. He has ascended on high.
3. In **Verse 8** Paul declares our Lord's gracious generosity – “He gave gifts to men . . .” In **Verse 11** Paul describes some of these gifts. - “And He gave . . .”
4. Paul begins by describing the four offices of the early church—Apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor/teacher. These offices were ordained by Christ to build-up His church. They were gifted to help build up the church by helping others grow in the use of their gifts.
Ephesians 4:12 NAU - "for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;"
5. Each of these offices was entrusted with the ministry of the Word. And all but the last have ceased to function in the church. Only the pastor/teacher would be an enduring office for the ministry of the Word to God's people. Last week I began to describe this office to you. I pointed out that the pastoral office is described using three synonymous terms:
These terms define the office.
 - A. ποιμην - usually translated "Pastor"
 - B. πρεσβύτερος - translated elder.
 - C. ἐπίσκοπος - translated in the King James version as "Bishop," it literally means "overseer."
6. All three of these elements involve teaching. All involve the right application of the Word of God. This is why a pastor's life is immersed in the Bible.
7. This morning I want to continue to look at the office of pastor. It is important that we understand this office that God has raised up to build His church.
This morning I want to conclude our brief look at the pastoral office.
We'll look at the unique giftedness and qualifications for the office of pastor then we'll look at how they function in Christ's church.

I. The office of pastor demands distinct gifts

A. There are some things to consider

1. First, pastoral gifts are not the same thing as natural gifts. This is true of all the gifts in the church—natural gifts are not the same as spiritual gifts. It is important for us to understand this.
 - a. Just because a man is able to lead a corporation doesn't mean he is able to lead the church.
 - b. Just because a man is a skillful professor doesn't mean he can teach in the church
 - c. Just because a man is a gifted speaker does not make him a preacher. None of the apostles were gifted orators. Moses was not a gifted orator.
 - d. Just being outgoing meeting people easily or enjoying social occasions does not make a man a pastor.
 - e. This doesn't mean that our natural abilities aren't used of God in our service to Him. Being skilled at maintenance is a blessing to the church as you exercise your gift of service. It is good for a pastor to have a wealth of life experience.
2. Second, even with their giftedness every pastor feels inadequate for his calling.
 - a. Paul said, "And who *is* sufficient for these things?"
 - b. Moses pleaded with God to send another
 - c. Paul saw preaching as a fearful thing
1 Corinthians 2:3-4 NAU - "I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, ⁴ and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power"
3. The pastor spends his entire life growing and maturing in his gifts and often still feels inadequate. I used to supply the pulpit for an aged pastor who told me that after so many years in the ministry he still felt inadequate to preach. And now after almost 30 years I understand what he meant.
4. All of the elders do not share equally in all of the gifts. All of the elders do not share equally in maturity and in proficiency in the use of pastoral gifts.

B. What are some of the gifts God gives men for pastoral ministry?

Remember, all do not possess all of the gifts in equal measure.

1. The gift of service – deacons and pastors share many of the same gifts.
2 Corinthians 4:5 NAU - "For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake."
1 Timothy 1:12 NAU - "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service" - διακονία – KJV - ministry
2. The gift of wisdom and judgment
 This is essential in the effective oversight and administration of Christ's church.
 This especially includes spiritual wisdom which is the ability to apply God's Word to the issues of daily life.

3. The gift of mercy that enables him to counsel and encourage those who are anxious or hurting.
 4. He will have a love for God's people – this is what is meant by the qualification, "given to hospitality" - φιλόξεινος
 5. He will have the ability to rule and lead men – this demands spiritual maturity. He must be sober minded. This maturity includes discernment. He will have an insight into men and their motives.
Titus 1:8 – "sensible" σώφρων – It means to be settled in the mind – KJV – prudent, CSV – sensible
- C. He also has to possess certain character traits:
He has a good reputation (blameless, above reproach), of good behavior
He is dedicated to his wife
He is vigilant, sober, not easily moved to anger, patient, not covetous or motivated by money.
He must be able to rule his house – his children are under subjection. This is important because the essence of his office is being able to manage the church
He must not be new to the faith
- D. There is another essential element to his calling - He must be able to teach. This is why Paul links the office of pastor to that of teaching – pastor/teacher
1. He will have the gift of teaching – the ability to communicate spiritual truths and correct errors. He will have a great love for God's Word. This is one of the things that makes him an able teacher. This is one of the things that keeps him a student of the Word.
1 Timothy 4:13-16 NAU - " Until I come, give attention to the *public* reading of *Scripture*, to exhortation and teaching. ¹⁴ Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. ¹⁵ Take pains with these things; be *absorbed* in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. ¹⁶ Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you."
 - a. The pastor will not be tossed about by every wind of doctrine or swayed by every new idea or scheme that becomes popular. This doesn't mean he isn't continually learning nor does it mean he is infallible, but it means he isn't easily swayed.
 - b. This is especially true of our internet age. The pastor must be established in his doctrine so that he can establish the church.
Ephesians 4:14-15 NAU - "As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; ¹⁵ but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ"
 - c. We read in **Titus 1** –
Titus 1:9 NAU - " holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict."

- d. This is what it means to be called to the ministry of the word
A man called to be a pastor or elder will have a compelling desire to strengthen God's people through the careful application of God's Word

- II. This is where the confusion sometimes comes – That the only place a man can fulfill this calling is from the pulpit – this places too narrow a restriction.
 - A. Every pastor is an able teacher
 - 1. This is his calling
 - 2. Every pastor should be able to preach
Paul exhorted Timothy
2 Timothy 4:2 NAU - "preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction."
"Be ready" - ἐφίστημι – (on or upon, stand) – literally it means to "stand by" – NIV – "be prepared"
The word for "in season" means "convenient"
 - 3. Able to teach for a pastor implies being able to expound the Word of God, to apply it to the hearts of God's people. This is at the heart of preaching
 - B. But not every pastor is equally gifted nor will every pastor be a primary preaching pastor.
 - 1. All are able teachers but all will not preach on a weekly basis
 - 2. This is essential as we consider the nature of plurality
If a church is to have a plurality of pastors, all are called to the ministry of the Word, but not all will conduct a pulpit ministry.
 - a. One may give himself to the administration of the church.
Sometimes they have the title, Executive Pastor. How does he do this? Through the application of God's Word
 - b. Another may have the gift of mercy and spends much time comforting hurting sheep. He may do most of the counseling. How does he do this? Through the application of God's Word.
 - c. Another may be gifted in music, skilled in church hymnody he is able to consistently apply God's Word in leading in God-centered worship.
 - d. All of the pastors will be building the church on God's Word
 - C. I think we can make a reasonable argument for a senior pastor – both Biblically and practically
 - 1. I think there is little doubt that James was the chief elder, the senior elder
 - a. James was the Jerusalem spokesman in the Judaism controversy
Acts 15:13 NAU - "After they had stopped speaking, James answered, saying, "Brethren, listen to me."
 - b. Again, in Acts 21 James is singled out from the rest
Acts 21:17-18 NAS - "And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. ¹⁸ And now the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present."

2. In a church with several pastors one will be the primary preacher, although any of the pastors are qualified to fill the pulpit and often will, and one will be leader.
 - a. Whatever terminology or titles are used are completely incidental. Southern Baptists are fond of the titles “senior pastor” and “associate pastor.” Before I became the senior pastor of Trinity I had the title, “associate pastor.” This is the terminology our sister church in Clinton uses.
 - b. Titles are nothing more than descriptions of function
- D. Which of the pastors will be the senior pastor
1. We don’t have Biblical support for a particular senior pastor calling
 - a. There does seem to be a distinction in the nature of pastoral calling. All are called to the ministry of the Word but not every pastor is called to a preaching ministry. They are able to preach but it isn’t the primary focus of their ministry.
 - b. Among the pastors some will be more gifted in leadership and preaching. The church recognizes this distinction and enables some to give themselves full-time to the work.
1 Timothy 5:17 NAU - "The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching."
 - c. These men will have a higher standard of theological training in order to equip them for the rigor of weekly preaching.
 2. Often a man will serve many years before occupying the role of senior pastor. I served for 10 years before I filled the role of senior pastor
 3. The church should set apart one of their pastors as the lead or senior pastor who will provide leadership to the church and even among the other pastors. Sometimes they are raised up from within. Sometimes they are called from without.
 4. The primary preaching pastor if at all possible should be full-time. He will obviously have the greatest need to labor in the Word and should be granted the time to do it.
- E. Churches are blessed to have multiple pastors serving together
1. The senior pastor does not hold a different office and labors alongside the other pastors in the care and edification of God’s people and the ministry of the Word.
 2. When the senior pastor leaves there is still a continuity of leadership and ministry and a possible pool from which to raise up the next senior pastor. If he doesn’t come from the board of elders they will provide leadership in seeking a new senior pastor.

III. Like all the gifts, how you finish is more important than how you begin

A. This is true of our salvation

1. A true believer is the one who finishes
Matthew 10:22 NAU - "You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved."
2. Jesus warned of temporary believers in the Parable of the Sower
Matthew 13:20-21 NAU - "The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹ yet he has no *firm* root in himself, but is *only* temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away."
3. Are you pressing on with joyful service and love to Christ? Are your gifts maturing and being used to the edification of your brothers and sisters in Christ?
4. It is a reminder of how important it is for us to encourage one another stirring up one another to press on.

- #### B. Many pastors begin the race with good intentions but do not finish
- Thabiti Anyabwile preached a sermon in 2011 in which he gave some startling statistics regarding pastors. He said of the sermon, "It was an honor to preach this passage to a congregation that has been full of love, support, and encouragement to me and my family these past five years. There was great liberty in unfolding text without fear of being misunderstood, without need of rebuking the people, and without having to fight against an impulse to complain or to pander because we've been treated with "double honor" since arriving."
These are some statistics compiled by the Schaeffer Institute

Hours and Pay

- **90%** of the pastors report working between **55 to 75** hours per week.
- **50%** feel unable to meet the **demands** of the job.
- **70%** of pastors feel grossly underpaid.
- **90%** of pastors said the **ministry was completely different** than what they thought it would be like before they entered the ministry.

Health and Well-Being

- **70%** of pastors constantly fight depression.
- **50%** of pastors feel so **discouraged** that they would leave the ministry if they could, but have no other way of making a living.

Marriage and Family

- **80%** believe pastoral ministry has **negatively** affected their families.
- **80%** of spouses feel the pastor is overworked.
- **80%** spouses feel left out and **under-appreciated** by church members.

Church Relationships

- **70%** do not have someone they consider a close friend.
- **40%** report serious conflict with a parishioner at least **once a month**.

Longevity

- **50%** of the ministers starting out will not last **5 years**.
- **1** out of every **10** ministers will actually retire as a minister in some form.
- Over **1,700** pastors left the ministry **every month** last year.
- Over **1,300** pastors were terminated by the local church **each month**, many without cause.

Conclusion:

1. God puts a call upon the life of pastors. It is a calling that they cannot escape.
1 Corinthians 9:16 NAU - "For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel."
 - a. God uses regular, weak, inadequate men.
 - b. We need to pray that God will continue to raise up pastors and deacons in our church.
2. But each member of the church should see himself or herself as a gift to the church. You should also feel compelled to give your life in service to Christ. God has equipped each one of us to build up the church. We'll see more of this next time. Notice **Verse 16 Ephesians 4:16 NAU** - "From whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."