

May 4, 1985

I am planning to start the Pastoral Studies Group again, only this time it will be on an invitational basis. I am limiting it to those who are especially interested in the ministry as a life work.

My present plan is that we will meet every other Thursday, that is, twice a month. We may have to change our meeting time now and then in order to keep from conflicting with other meetings of the church. But the first meeting will be next Thursday at our home at 7:30 p.m. I am taking this way of letting you know about it so you can come if you want to. It will not be announced from the pulpit nor in the Tableau. I will do my best to limit our sessions to an hour and a half so we can dismiss around 9 p.m. If it is not possible for you to come I will understand, but if you decide to, I would like for you to consider it as a regular commitment. The value of our times together will be increased by your regular attendance.

Enclosed is a copy of the schedule which I intend to follow. There will be some supplementary reading as we come to the various subjects. I am praying that the Lord will make our times together very profitable to you, as I know they will be to me.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Your pastor and friend,

L. Dwight Custis

PASTORAL STUDIES

- I. The Pastor -- the nature of his work, the Biblical description.
- II. The Pastor and his preparation for the ministry:
 - A. His salvation and assurance of it.
 - B. His call.
 - C. His training.
 - D. His marriage.
- III. The Pastor and his Lord -- his personal life.
 - A. Bible reading and prayer.
 - B. His obedience to God and his love for the Lord.
 - C. His leisure time and recreation. His health.
- IV. The Pastor and his family: his wife and his children.

The Pastor has a special ministry to his wife, but she is also his chief helper with their children, that together they might raise their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

 - A. His responsibilities toward his wife and their children:
 - 1. To love them.
 - 2. To provide for them.
 - 3. To pray for them.
 - 4. To be an example of godliness to them.
 - 5. To teach them.
 - B. Additional responsibilities with his children:
 - 1. To discipline them.
 - 2. To raise them in the church.
- V. The Pastor and his work in the church.
 - A. His need for guidance.
 - B. His relationship with the people in the church:
 - 1. His personal appearance.
 - 2. His love for the people.

3. His friendliness and impartiality.
 4. His sobriety.
 5. His faith and courage, his spiritual strength.
 6. His promptness.
 7. His leadership and relationship with the church leaders (elders and deacons).
- C. His study -- the preparation of his messages.
- D. His preaching.
1. The content: the Word of God.
 2. His style.
 3. His twofold purpose:
 - a. The edification of believers.
 - b. The salvation of those who are not saved.
- E. His visitation and counseling.
- F. His correspondence.
- G. The indoctrination of newcomers.
- H. Special ministries:
1. Baptism.
 2. The Lord's Supper.
 3. Baby dedication.
 4. Weddings.
 5. Funerals.
- I. Church finances.
- J. Missions -- at home and in foreign countries:
1. Assisting other works.
 2. Starting new churches.
 3. Supporting foreign missionaries.
- VI. The Pastor and his trials.

PASTORAL STUDIES

Chapter 1

The Pastor -- The Nature of His Work The Biblical Description

The pastor is a man called of God for the work of the ministry. He is set apart for that specific work. A true pastor is in the work, not primarily because he chose the work, but because he was chosen for the work. See Acts 9:15, 16; 13:2, 3. He is called to do the work of God according to the will of God. And the will of God for the ministry, the nature of the work, is specifically described throughout the Word of God.

It is the purpose of this first chapter to examine the Scriptures to learn what the work of the pastor is in his relationship to God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Word, in his relationship to the church, to the world, and to Satan.

Since it is really impossible to separate the Godhead from the Word, they will be considered under one heading.

I. THE PASTOR IN HIS RELATIONSHIP TO THE GODHEAD AND TO THE WORD OF GOD.

The pastor is often placed in difficult positions where he must decide whether or not he is going to please people, or please the Lord. This decision really needs to be made before he ever enters upon his ministry, but it will be tested throughout his life. There is only one right way to go: His primary responsibility is to please God. See Gal. 1:10; 1 Thess. 2:4.

Paul's charge to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:10-4:8. This is the charge which is set before every man in the ministry. He is to please God. He is to glorify God. He is to work for those words of our Lord in Matthew 25:21, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: . . . enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

Therefore, it must follow that the work of the pastor is not a work which every pastor is to decide for himself, but it is a work which is designed by God. Let us note from the Scriptures what that work is.

A. A man of prayer (Acts 6:4).

Note the prayers of the Apostle Paul in his Epistles.

Read The Preacher and Prayer, by E. M. Bounds.

All Christians are to pray, but the pastor above all others should be a man given to prayer. See what Col. 4:12 tells us about Epaphras.

B. In relation to God and to His Word:

1. The pastor is a minister of Christ and a steward of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. 4:1, 2).
2. The pastor is to be "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15).

This means that the pastor must always be a diligent and careful student of the Word of God. If at all possible, he should acquire a working knowledge of the original languages of the Bible: the Hebrew and the Greek.

3. The pastor is to be a preacher of the Word (2 Tim. 4:2).

Read Chapters 1 and 2 in Preachers and Preaching, by Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones.

See also 1 Cor. 1:17-21; 2:1-5.

II. THE PASTOR AND HIS RELATIONSHIP TO THE CHURCH.

- A. First and foremost, he is to be an example for his people to follow. See 1 Tim. 4:12-16; 1 Pet. 5:3. Every pastor should be able to say to his people what Paul wrote to the Philippian church in Phil. 4:9.

Begin to memorize 2 Cor. 6:3-10.

- B. The two responsibilities of the pastor which can never be separated are:

1. He is a pastor and elder. These terms are very similar as to the work which they indicate. As a pastor, he is a shepherd of the flock; as an elder, or bishop (the two terms speak of the same office in the church), he carefully oversees the lives of the people of God who are under his care.
2. He is a pastor and teacher. Cf. Eph. 4:11b.

A man cannot be a true pastor unless he is a teacher.

Preaching describes how a pastor does his this part of his work; teaching indicates what the nature of his preaching is.

- C. The pastor is also a servant to his people (2 Cor. 4:5).

This does not mean that he does everything in the church, but it does mean that he lives for the spiritual blessing and edification of those who are under his pastoral care.

See Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Thess. 3:8-10.

III. THE PASTOR AND HIS RELATIONSHIP TO THE WORLD.

The pastor has two main lines of ministry that he must be concerned about as he serves the Lord:

- 1) In his ministry to the church, he is concerned about edification.
- 2) In his ministry to the world, he is concerned about evangelization.

Thus, in his ministry to the world he is an ambassador and a witness. See 2 Cor. 5:20; Eph. 6:18-20; Phil. 1:12-20.

IV. THE PASTOR AND HIS CONFLICT WITH SATAN.

Here the pastor is a soldier. See 2 Tim. 2:3, 4. And so Eph. 6:10-20 applies first to the pastor and then to his people. He is their leader in the conflict with the forces of the Evil One.

More will be said about this aspect of the pastor's life and work under Chapter VI, The Pastor and his trials. Let no one think that the pastorate is easy work. If the pastor is true to his divine calling, he will be a marked man and singled out by the forces of the Evil One for constant opposition. Passages which tell of the Apostle Paul's conflicts are numerous, but notice for now 2 Cor. 1:3-11; 11:23-33.

PASTORAL STUDIES

Chapter 2

The Pastor and His Preparation for the Ministry

The pastor is, as we saw in Chapter 1, to be an example, a pattern, for his people to follow. Therefore, much that needs to be said about the pastor would apply also to his people since he is a Christian first of all, and then a pastor. If he fails in his life, then he fails in his ministry. To be sure there are certain things that apply uniquely to one who is called of God to the ministry, but no pastor can afford to forget that he is to make it his objective to be able to say to his people, as Paul said to the Corinthians, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1).

The second and third points below apply to the pastor in a special way, but the first and fourth points apply to him as they apply also to his people.

I. HIS SALVATION AND THE ASSURANCE OF IT.

No man has any right to be in the ministry who is not a true child of God. A major part of his work is the preaching of the Gospel. He must know the transforming power of Christ in his own life or he will not know what he is talking about when he seeks to explain the Gospel to others. Even though a man is a seminary graduate, if he does not know Christ as his Saviour, he is as blind to spiritual truth as anyone can be. This fact is being overlooked in many churches today to the detriment of the work of the Lord.

A. Salvation.

We cannot be reminded too often that salvation is a divine work in the hearts of sinners whereby they are made new creatures. See 2 Cor. 5:17; John 3:1-21 (a good example of a "preacher" who was not saved).

The doctrines of grace help us to understand the divine nature of salvation. It is not enough that there be a profession of faith; there must be a changed life, a life changed in accordance with the teaching of Scripture concerning salvation.

B. Assurance.

The doctrine of assurance follows a twofold emphasis in the Word of God:

- 1) The witness of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer.
- 2) The evidences of salvation which are to be seen in a believer's life.

1. The witness of the Holy Spirit. See Rom. 8:14-17, 23; Gal. 4:1-7; 1 John 2:24b; 4:13; 5:5-10.

Thus it is obvious from Scripture that true salvation is accompanied by assurance. This may be stronger in some than in others, but it will be present to some extent in all believers since the Holy Spirit immediately indwells every child of God at the time he is saved. A man entering the ministry must know what this is.

2. The evidences of salvation as revealed in 1 John.

- a. The test of fellowship with God--a walk in the light (1 John 1:1-7).
- b. The test of obedience to the Word of God (1 John 1:4-2:6).
- c. The test of love for the brethren, i.e., other Christians (1 John 2:7-11; 3:11-24; 4:7-12).
- d. The test of our attitude toward the world (1 John 2:15-17).
- e. The test of the doctrine of Christ (1 John 2:18-28; 4:1-6).
- f. The test of righteousness (1 John 2:29-3:10).
- g. The test of love for God (4:12-5:4).

Note: In chapter 5 John seems to bring together many of the tests of salvation mentioned earlier because he seems intent on showing that the tests are intimately related to each other, that it is not a question of having one or another, but that a true believer will have them all. For example, in 1 John 5:3 we have love for God and obedience to the Word. In verse 5 we have overcoming the world and holding to the belief that Jesus is the Son of God--and so on.

Note the emphasis on the doctrine of assurance in 1 John 5:13, 20.

These passages having to do with salvation and the assurance of salvation must be of primary importance to any man who feels that he is called of God to enter the ministry.

II. HIS CALL.

As a Christian, the pastor, like all other Christians, has been sovereignly called by God to come to Christ. In addition he has a call from God to devote his life to the ministry of the Word. But thirdly, he will be called of God to minister in a particular place. Therefore, the subject of the call is extremely important to the pastor. Under this heading we are concerned with the second

of these three calls--the call to the ministry.

Read Chapter 2 in Lectures to My Students, by Charles Haddon Spurgeon.

See the following passages on this subject: Acts 9:15, 16; 20:24, 28; Rom. 10:13-15; 1 Cor. 4:1, 2; 2 Cor. 5:18-20.

The call to preach the Word of God as a pastor will be confirmed in the following ways. These are adapted from Spurgeon's chapter on The Call to the Ministry, mentioned above, in which he stated not only his own convictions, but also those of John Newton.

- A. A man called of God will have a desire to preach, and this desire will continue and grow. It will be so strong that the man called of God will not be happy doing anything else.
- B. A man called of God will have a gift for preaching and to work with people.

This includes the ability to study the Word and to convey what he has learned to the people of God.

- C. A man called of God to preach will be recognized by the Lord's people as being gifted for the work of the ministry.

See the principle which is apparent in Acts 6:3.

- D. A man called of God to preach will experience some blessing and usefulness in his ministry.
- E. A man called of God will experience the leading of the Lord in providing him with opportunities for ministry.
- F. A man called of God will be faithful in his ministry--walking in fellowship with the Lord, not giving up when there is opposition, and never compromising with the truth of the Word of God.

By fellowship with the Lord is meant a relationship which produces a holy life.

Note again what Paul wrote in 2 Cor. 6:3-10.

III. HIS TRAINING.

The main ministry of the pastor is the teaching of the Word of God. Obviously in his work as a pastor he will be called upon to do other things, such as working with the church leaders, counselling his people in their times of need, conducting weddings and funerals, etc. But his chief calling is to preach the Word of God, and therefore nothing must be allowed to supercede that work. Consequently, his training must be designed to prepare him for that

work.

That training may include university, seminary or Bible school, but the main thing is that the pastor get the training necessary to equip him for the work that God has called him to do. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find schools where such training can be obtained. Each man preparing for the ministry should carefully seek the mind of the Lord as to the place where he will receive his preparation. It is important to be under the instruction of godly men who have had experience in the pastoral ministry.

It must be remembered that the pastor never actually completes his training. He is always learning, always seeking under the blessing of God to become more holy, to become a better teacher, and to be a pastor who is more and more devoted to the Lord and to the people whom the Lord has called him to serve. When the pastor stops growing in the Lord and in his work, his usefulness will definitely be adversely affected.

The main subjects which the pastor needs to be studying in his preparation for the ministry are:

A. Bible.

The pastor is called upon to preach the Word. He is to be prepared to expound the meaning of the sixty-six books of the Bible. He must believe that it is through the Word of God that God works in saving people, and in edifying those who are saved. Therefore the pastor must devote his life to the study of this one Book, the Bible.

It is impossible to overemphasize this part of the pastor's preparation. There are too many men in the ministry today who have training in many other things, but who are deficient here.

B. The original languages: Hebrew and Greek.

There are not many men in the ministry who become experts in Hebrew and Greek, but the pastor should have a working knowledge of both languages. He needs to be accurate in interpreting Scripture, and for this a knowledge of both Hebrew and Greek is invaluable. Knowing Hebrew and Greek does not eliminate the need for dependence upon the Holy Spirit in the study of the Word, but the Word was originally given in these languages, and therefore the pastor needs to be able to prepare his messages by going to the original text.

In addition to increasing the pastor's confidence that he has rightly divided the Word of truth (cf. 2 Tim. 2:15), he will find that the ability to consult the original text will greatly enrich his own life. If a pastor has not had the

opportunity to study the original languages, there are some very helpful works to assist him, such as:

Wilson's Old Testament Word Studies
Bullinger's Critical Lexicon and Concordance
Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words

C. Theology.

The Bible must be studied by the books which make up the Bible, but it also must be studied according to the doctrines which are taught in the Bible. The major divisions of Systematic Theology are:

1. Bibliology -- the study of the Bible, how we got it, the claims that it makes for itself, etc.
2. Theology Proper -- the study of God: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. Angelology -- the study of angels, fallen and unfallen. Thus, the study of Satan would be included here.
4. Anthropology -- the study of man.
5. Soteriology -- the study of salvation.
6. Christology -- the study of the Lord Jesus Christ.
7. Pneumatology -- the study of the Holy Spirit.
8. Ecclesiology -- the study of the church.
9. Eschatology -- the study of the culmination of the ages.

Not all men who have written on systematic theology actually use these divisions, but these are the major doctrines which they usually discuss. Some of the major works on theology are:

Berkhof, Systematic Theology
Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion
Chafer, Systematic Theology
Dabney, Lectures in Systematic Theology
Dagg, Manual of Theology
Gill, Body of Divinity
Griffith Thomas, The Principles of Theology
Hodge, A. A., Outlines of Theology
Hodge, Charles, Systematic Theology
Murray, The Collected Writings of John Murray
Owen, The Works of John Owen
Shedd, Dogmatic Theology
Thornwell, The Collected Writings of John Henry Thornwell
Warfield, Biblical and Theological Studies, and other works

D. Hermeneutics -- the study of the interpretation of Scripture.

Sincere Christians hold differing views on many points of Biblical doctrine. This is due to varied methods of interpreting the meaning of Scripture. The proper principles of interpreting Scripture are to be within the Bible itself, and it is vitally important that the pastor know what these are.

E. Church History.

We learn from the past. The Bible itself shows the importance of history because much of it, both in the Old and New Testaments, is history. The pastor who knows church history is less likely to repeat the mistakes of the past, and, on the other hand, he will benefit immensely from that in the past which has brought the blessing of God.

F. Pastoral Theology.

This includes everything that has to do with the work of a pastor in the local church. There is much written material that is available, and some of it is very valuable. The best Book, of course, that has ever been written on the subject is the Bible. The New Testament has priority in this area, particularly from the Book of Acts on to the end, but much can be learned also from the Old Testament and the Gospels from the ministries of patriarchs, prophets, priests, and kings, and especially from the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. All of the writings of men apart from Scripture must be evaluated in the light of what God has given us in his Word. In other words, treat books on Pastoral Theology like you would any commentary on a book of the Bible: Check them by the Word of God!

In addition to books written specifically to help pastors with their work, such as, Spurgeon's Lectures to His Students, or Lloyd-Jones excellent work, Preachers and Preaching, you will find a wealth of information in commentaries, biographies, and so on, written by men with pastoral experience. A good example is the commentaries of John Calvin. Calvin was a pastor, and, in commenting on the Scriptures, gives many and great helps for the pastor. Another example is the autobiography of George Muller of Bristol.

The Puritans were great pastors. Their writings provide the present-day pastor with excellent guidance in the work of the ministry.

IV. HIS MARRIAGE.

A man called of God to the work of the ministry must give special

attention to the matter of his marriage. If a pastor's marriage fails for any reason, he will be unable to continue with his work. The prospective pastor must be very careful as to the one he marries, and he must also be careful to maintain a proper, a godly relationship to his wife throughout his married life.

All of this will mean that he must be seek the leading and blessing of the Lord in the following ways:

- A. He must not only marry a lady who knows the Lord as her Saviour (and this must be tested by time), but one who believes that she has also been called of God into the Lord's work. This means that she must be wholeheartedly in sympathy with the work that the Lord has led her husband to do.
- B. He must love his wife as Christ loved the church. The pastor must be an example to his people as to what a husband should be.
- C. He must be a godly example to his wife.
- D. He must faithfully pray for his wife and continually instruct her in the Word of God and in the work of the ministry.
- E. As the Lord blesses the marriage with children, the children must be raised in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, being in subjection to their parents.

One of the major responsibilities of a pastor will be that of helping the families in the church. Therefore, it is vital that the pastor's home exemplify his own instruction to his people.

For the above points, see Ephesians 5:25-33; 1 Timothy 3:4, 5; 1 Peter 5:1-4.

PASTORAL STUDIES

Chapter 3

The Pastor and His Lord -- His Personal Life

As strange as it may seem, it is not unusual for the pastor, who is to be concerned about the spiritual lives of his people, to neglect his own relationship with the Lord. To do this is to undermine the very foundation of his ministry. Therefore, every effort needs to be made to maintain a life of intimate fellowship with the Lord.

First, and most important, is:

I. BIBLE READING AND PRAYER.

The pastor who teaches the Word will be spending much of his time in the study of the Word. In his preparation he must make sure that he applies what he is studying to his own life first of all. But, in addition to his preparation, he needs time to read the Word for the nourishment of his own soul.

To accomplish this he should read the Word from Genesis to the Revelation at least once a year (and encourage his people to do the same. Not only will he profit from this immensely himself, but it will greatly enrich his ministry. The more familiar the pastor is with all of the Word of God, the greater will be his authority in preaching, and, with the blessing of the Lord, the greater will be his power. Paul's exhortation to Timothy, "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" (1 Tim. 4:13), is good advice for every Christian, but especially good for the pastor.

Along with his Bible reading the pastor should regularly practise the habit of meditating on the Word of God. This means that he must think about what he is reading, turning it over and over in his mind. See Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:2; 1 Tim. 4:15, 16.

But along with Bible reading, the pastor must be faithful in prayer. He must pray for himself, for his family, for his people, for other pastors and missionaries whom the Lord may lay on his heart. He should also be faithful in praying for his government. See 1 Tim. 2:1-7.

The pastor needs to be taught how to pray just as much as he needs to be taught the truths of the Word of God. See Luke 11:1-13. It is only as he knows how to pray that he will be able to help his people in this area of their lives. This is one place where the reading of the Word will be of tremendous help. Saints in past days spoke of "turning the Word of God into prayer." That is, they would pray about the things that they had just read in their Bible reading. Doing this causes one to be more alert while he is reading, and it also gives great variety in praying. It also guarantees that prayer will be according to the will of God. See 1 John 5:14, 15.

The Word of God can be of great help in another way when it comes to prayer. There is power and blessing in quoting verses or passages of Scripture when praying. This can be done by reading the Word in prayer, or by quoting verses from memory.

Every pastor has to determine the best time and place for prayer, but one thing is certain both for Bible reading and prayer: He must be FAITHFUL! See 1 Cor. 4:1, 2. There will be many times when the pastor will not be aware that his prayers are being answered in any significant way, and he will often be inclined to wonder about the value of prayer. Such doubt is obviously the work of Satan. At such times the pastor will have to cast himself upon the Lord in a renewed way so that he will continue to read his Bible and to pray even when he cannot see visible results from his praying. Remember that the watchword of the pastor's life and work is FAITHFULNESS. And nowhere will the pastor be more tempted to become unfaithful than in his own personal Bible reading and prayer.

II. THE PASTOR'S OBEDIENCE TO GOD AND HIS LOVE FOR THE LORD.

It was to a group of pastors that the Lord first said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Thus He forever linked together our obedience to the Word with our love for Himself.

Bible reading and prayer must not be allowed to become a formality. The pastor must always be thinking about his own relationship to the Lord before his ministry. If he encourages his people to do things which he is not doing, he is a hypocrite! According to the Lord Jesus, the greatest commandment is that which He mentioned in Matthew 22:37, 38. This is the first for the pastor as well as for his people. Therefore, the pastor must pray constantly and fervently that in his reading of the Word and in his praying he will be drawn into a life of greater love for his Saviour. Along with the word FAITHFULNESS the pastor will find that he needs to be continually aware of the need for PERSEVERANCE. It will be a great help to meditate on passages of Scripture where personal love for the Lord is expressed, such as, Psalm 27:4.

III. THE PASTOR'S LEISURE TIME AND RECREATION.

The work of the ministry is hard work when it is done according to the will of God, and, therefore, the pastor will constantly find that he needs a change of pace. He needs time for the special refreshment of his soul and his body. But the pastor should always keep in mind that the use of leisure time should never make it difficult for him to come back to his work. Rather, it should make him eager to take up again the work that God has called him to do.

Sometimes the pastor may need some special time to rest and to sleep. He should always be careful to get sufficient rest for his

body and soul each day (and this may mean resting during the day), but there will be other times when he will need a vacation from his regular duties. It is much easier to get depressed, and even for Satan to take advantage of us, when we are tired.

The Puritans had a saying: "You render the bow useless by keeping it always bent."

PASTORAL STUDIES

Chapter 4

The Pastor and His Family

Amazingly, this is one area of the pastor's life and work which most books on pastoral work seem to ignore. And yet, apart from a pastor's personal relationship with the Lord, nothing is more important in his life than his relationship with his wife and children. Perhaps one great reason for the ineffectiveness of the ministry today is due to the fact that pastors get so busy with their work that they neglect their families. Throughout life special care must be taken by the pastor to make sure that this does not happen to him. Troubled and broken marriages, as well as children who are not walking with the Lord, really disqualify a man from the work of the ministry.

All that is said in Scripture about a husband's relationship to his wife, and about a father's relationship to his children, applies to the pastor who is to be an example to his family as well as to the people to whom he ministers. See 1 Pet. 5:3b, ". . . but being ensamples to the flock." See also 1 Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:7, 8. If the pastor is not an example in his own home, to his family, it is doubtful if he will be an example any place else. The pastor teaches not only by word of mouth, but by his life. Many pastors have had their ministry ruined because they have failed in this area: the home. The pastor must be a man of God to his family. All that has been said in the preceding chapter about the pastor and his Lord is to be displayed first of all in his home. His first responsibility is to the members of his family: his wife and children.

I. THE PASTOR'S WIFE.

In Chapter 2, pages 6 and 7, we had a section on the pastor's marriage. Review that section. Like any other wife, a pastor's wife is to be his helper. See Gen. 2:18. But, as he will need her help continually, so she will need his help continually. It is not easy to be a pastor in these days, nor is it easy to be a pastor's wife. She will suffer with her husband in the criticisms which are leveled at him, and will be burdened with the problems of the Lord's work just as her husband will be. Often the troubles will be harder for her to bear than for her husband. Any pastor's wife find encouragement in reading the chapters in Spurgeon's autobiography which were written by Mrs. Spurgeon. They show not only the joys of being a pastor's wife, but the sacrifices necessary, and the particular trials which Mrs. Spurgeon experienced in her life in the church with her husband.

Although the Apostle Paul was not married, as far as we know, yet, in giving the qualifications for a pastor, he included this: "the husband of one wife" (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:6). Thus, while he probably would not have said that a pastor had to be married, yet it was very desirable. There are things which a pastor's wife can do to help in the work of the ministry which he cannot do, or could not do except with great difficulty.

Other verses to consider in connection with the pastor's relationship with his wife are:

- 1) Eph. 5:25-33.
- 2) Col. 3:19.
- 3) 1 Pet. 3:7

It is equally important that a pastor's wife know what her responsibility is toward her husband. Usually she will have a growing ministry to the women of the church, and much of that will have to do with helping the women to accept their God-given place in relation to their husbands and children. In this connection, see the following Scriptures:

- 1) Gen. 2:18.
- 2) Eph. 5:22-24.
- 3) Col. 3:18.
- 4) 1 Pet. 3:1-6.

The wife must realize that, since she and her husband are "one flesh" (Eph. 5:31b), she is a vital part of her husband's ministry and, therefore, the godliness which is required of him is required of her also.

Therefore, the pastor must not overlook his ministry to his wife. He is to love her, to provide for her, to be an example to her, to pray for her, and to teach her. They are not lords over the people of God, but their servants and their examples, called of God to devote their lives to the people of God whom they serve. The pastor and his wife should pray that the Lord would give them the kind of a relationship which they would be glad to see all of their people have. See Phil. 4:9.

II. THE PASTOR'S CHILDREN.

Here again, a pastor's relationship to his children is no different from the relationship which other men in his congregation have to their children. The Scriptures which apply to them, apply to him as well.

See the following Scriptures:

- 1) Eph. 6:1-4.
- 2) Col. 3:20, 21.

There are several things that a pastor needs to keep in mind in raising his family:

- A. He is not to turn this part of his life, the training of his children, over to his wife. Obviously she will be a great help to him in this, but the Word of God makes it clear that he is the one who is primarily responsible for their training.
- B. He must remember that his children are sinners by nature, and that their primary need is to know Jesus Christ as their Saviour. This cannot be forced (and the pastor must be

careful not to run ahead of the Lord at this point). Therefore, all of his training must be accompanied by much prayer, and carried on in a godly way.

- C. Never make your children feel that they are different. Avoid calling them, PK's. This will have one of two effects. Either it will make them proud with the idea that they are above the other children and/or young people in the church, or it will make them resentful that they cannot be a regular member with their peers.
- D. Never make your children feel that they must act properly because their father is the pastor. This, too, will create resentments which often have a disastrous effect upon them. Besides, it is the wrong motive for godly living. Even the pastor must not act in a godly way just because he is the pastor; he must seek to be godly because he wants to please the Lord. This is what he must establish in the hearts of his children--that they need to be concerned about pleasing the Lord.
- E. The pastor must always remember, as has been stated a number of times, that he teaches not just by precept, but by a godly example. John Broadus, who has written, A TREATISE ON THE PREPARATION AND DELIVERY OF SERMONS, stated as the first qualification for effective preaching, piety (pp. 7, 8). The same is true regarding the pastor's ministry to his family.

One final word:

III. THE PASTOR AS A FATHER TO HIS PEOPLE.

If a pastor is a good father, it will make him a better pastor. Paul called both Timothy and Titus his sons in the faith. He may have led Titus to Christ, but that may not have been the case with Timothy who had a godly mother and grandmother. But this all teaches us that the pastor has a fatherly ministry to all of his people, those he has led to Christ, and those whom he has not led to Christ, but who have been nurtured under his ministry. Therefore, all that the pastor would do for the spiritual welfare of his wife and children, he would also do for the members of the family of God who are under his care. See 1 Cor. 4:14-17; 2 Cor. 6:13; 1 Thess. 2:10-13 (v. 11).

PASTORAL STUDIES

Chapter 5

The Pastor and His Work in the Church

Everything that we have considered previously is foundational to the work of the Pastor and will bear directly upon his work. This chapter deals, of course, with the heart of our pastoral studies: the Pastor's work in the church.

If a man is going to be happy and fruitful in his work as a pastor, there must be no question in his mind as to the divine origin of the Church. He needs to understand that there is the Church, the body of Christ, but he must also believe that the Lord established local churches for His own glory, for the blessing of His people, and as the basis for a testimony to the whole world. A pastor should be well acquainted with such passages as 1 Cor. 12:12-31; Rom. 12:3-8; Eph. 1:22, 23; 3:1-13; 4:4, 11-16; 5:22-32. (There are similar passages in Colossians which correspond with those in Ephesians.) See also 1 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:2; etc.

These are days when "para-church" organizations have become very strong and are, in fact, dictating to local churches as to the way in which the work of the Lord should go. Para is from a Greek preposition spelled the same way which indicates something that is along side of the local church, but not actually a part of it. Para-church organizations include mission boards, Christian schools on all levels, Campus Crusade, Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, Billy Graham, and the like. Obviously God has used these organizations, but the problem is that these organizations function independently of any church authority and often become a substitute for the local church to the people who are involved in them. It is true that many of these organizations have come into existence because of the failure of local churches to fulfill their God-given purpose, but the solution to the problem is not to multiply organizations outside of the church. What we need is a new generation of pastors, men filled with the Word of God and the Spirit of God, who will bring the people of God in this present age back to a realization of what the church is and what the church should be doing. In order to bring people back to the church, churches have resorted to various methods of entertainment rather than looking into the Word of God for the guidance that is so sorely needed for the Body of Christ in these days.

Therefore, a pastor must be a pastor by strong conviction--conviction that the local church is the one organization established by God which is be responsible for the work of the Lord in this present age. The Lord's work faces serious problems today because there is too much of that which was characteristic of the days of the judges in Israel: men are doing that which is right in their own eyes, instead of doing that which is right in God's eyes. We can only be sure that it is right in God's eyes when what we are doing is in harmony with the New Testament.

Having recognized the character of things in our day, let us proceed with the work of the pastor in the local church.

A. THE PASTOR'S NEED FOR GUIDANCE.

This falls into four different areas where he will need to know the will of God:

1. What he is.
2. Where he should be.
3. What he should do.
4. How he should do it.

The fact that a man is a pastor does not mean that it is easier for him to determine the will of God than it is for the rest of the Lord's people. It may, in fact, be harder because of the position which he holds as a leader of the Lord's people. And it will often be the case that the struggles that a pastor goes through in determining the will of God will be of great benefit to him in helping his people as they seek to know the will of God.

1. What he is.

Guidance comes primarily from the Word of God. A man is called to be a pastor before he ever actually becomes a pastor. Therefore in preparation for his work he should read and study the Word of God carefully to learn what is involved in being a pastor. Such guidance is given throughout the New Testament, but a great deal can also be learned from the men of God who were the spiritual leaders of Israel in the Old Testament. They were shepherds to God's people, whether patriarchs, or judges, or priests, or kings, or prophets. Remember that shepherd is the meaning of the word pastor.

2. Where he should be.

If a man is to work as a pastor he must have a church. Two things enter into this: first, he must be assured that the Lord wants him in a particular place; second, the people in that particular place must want him as their pastor. The second can be a confirmation of the first. But the fact that he is given a call by a church does not necessarily mean that that is where the Lord wants His servant to be.

The first difficulty that the prospective pastor faces is to be placed in contact with a church which is in need of a pastor. It has become a common practice today to send out resumes so that pastors place themselves in a position which is identical to that of a man seeking secular employment. It is hard to justify this in the light of what we have in the Word of God. Of course a church will have questions to ask a prospective pastor, and those questions should be answered, but it is difficult to see how the pastor can really enjoy the full meaning of what it means to be led by the Lord if he follows such procedures. It appears to much to be begging for a position. Instead, there should be much prayer and dependence upon God to lead in a providential way to the very place that He wants His servant to be. If God has truly called a man to preach, and to the work of the pastorate, He will see to it that His servant always has a place of ministry. This

is where our belief in the sovereignty of God will be put to the test, and, if we are patient and prayerful, will be more firmly impressed upon our minds and hearts.

If a call is given by a church to a man that he might be the pastor, the man who is called must carefully seek the mind of the Lord with regard to the call. In addition to the guidance that the Lord gives in the heart, several things need to be considered in seeking to know God's will. These are:

- 1) The doctrinal position of the church.
- 2) The type of ministry that the people are interested in. Are the people mainly interested in growth, or do they want a pastor who will teach them the Word of God, and who will show them by his life how to live for the Lord and to serve the Lord?
- 3) The practice of the church with regard to baptism.
- 4) Any denominational affiliation.
- 5) The willingness of the other leaders of the church, as well as the people, to be led.

3. What he should do.

This will depend upon what the pastor has learned about the work of the pastor, as recommended above.

Obviously he will want to begin immediately with the ministry of the Word. But, in order to know the needs of his people, he will want to get acquainted with them as quickly as he can, starting with the leaders, and then including all who are under his care. As indicated in Acts 6:4, the pastor has two primary responsibilities: the ministry of the Word, and prayer. Therefore, he should begin immediately to pray for his people by name. And he needs to think of his responsibility to pray for his people as Samuel thought of it in his day. See 1 Sam. 12:23.

The new pastor should not think immediately in terms of changes that need to be made. He needs to win the confidence of his people so that they will follow him in changes which he feels would be beneficial for the people and for the work.

4. How he should do it.

It is possible in anything to do the right thing in the wrong way. That is true of the work of the pastor. We are to lead the people, not drive them. We exhort; we do not dictate. The truth needs to be spoken, but it must always be spoken in love. See Eph. 4:15. (Read vv. 11-16).

The pastor will always find it necessary to be patient. See what Paul said in 2 Cor. 6:4, "in much patience." The pastor's faith will be severely tried again and again. He will often feel that he has to quit, that there is no point in going on. But nowhere in the Word is the pastor promised that his work will be easy.

In fact, just the opposite is indicated: it is a hard work. But when the pastor perseveres in doing the will of God as God would have him do it, he will see the guidance of the Lord in his work.

B. HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PEOPLE IN THE CHURCH:

The pastor should always remember that he is primarily a shepherd to the flock over which the Lord has made him an overseer. Therefore, a good relationship with his people is of primary importance.

1. His personal appearance.

This is a day when anything goes as far as dress is concerned. It is easy for the pastor to get into sloppy habits of dress, but, if he does, he will impair his influence with some of his people, or with some people he would like to have under his ministry. The pastor should not seek to be the last word in fashions, but he should dress as the businessmen in his congregation dress when they go to work. The Lord is worthy of our best in every area, and dress is no exception. A pastor's appearance will tell you a lot about the estimation he has of the position he holds.

Needless to say, a pastor should be clean as well as neat. He should be always be careful about offending with either body odor or bad breath.

2. His love for the people.

The pastor is not a hireling. He is not on a 40-hour week. If he does not love his work, and love the people he works with, he should not be in the ministry. The Apostle Paul was a great example to pastors in this regard.

Often 1 Corinthians 13 is referred to as portraying the love that a husband and wife should have for each other, but the pastor should read that chapter over frequently to be reminded of the love that he should have for his people. After all, the love of God in our hearts is always the same, and therefore the love of a pastor for his people will be exactly like all other Christian love.

Other important passages are: Rom. 1:7-13; 9:1-5; 2 Cor. 12:14, 15; Gal. 4:19; Phil. 1:3-11; Col. 1:3-8, 24-29; and many others. It is very apparent that, if a pastor loves his people, he will be praying for them, and he will delight himself in serving them, regardless of how difficult the work may be.

The work of a pastor is not a profession; it is a divine vocation. His work is not that of running an organization, not of building a large church. His work is people--building up the saints, and seeing other people drawn to Christ through the

faithful ministry of the Word.

3. His friendliness and impartiality.

Every pastor has to learn that he has to win the confidence and love of his people. He will usually have their respect immediately, but he needs to win their friendship and their love. In the same way, a congregation needs to win the friendship and love of their pastor. Both pastor and people should remember Prov. 18:24,

A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly:
and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

However, in making friends a pastor must be careful to avoid partiality among the people of the church. He may be closer to some of his people than he is to others, but he ought to do all within his power to avoid giving his people the impression that he likes some of them better than he does others. There are always those in a congregation with whom the pastor will feel a special kinship, but he must continually remember that he is the pastor of all of the people. He should even make a special effort to get closer to those who seem to be aloof.

4. His sobriety.

A pastor needs to manifest the joy of the Lord, but never to the point of being frivolous. His people need to feel that he always takes his work seriously. The word that is translated sober in the Bible contains the idea of being self-restrained. Joking may be entertaining, and humor is not always to be considered as being in bad taste, but it needs to be looked upon with caution. It is easy for it to get out of hand and for the pastor to say something which he would like to call back.

Cf. a passage like Eph. 5:1-4.

5. His faith and courage, his spiritual strength.

This does not mean that the pastor will always be "up." There are many ways in which the work of the pastor can be the most discouraging work that there is. The more spiritual a man's work is, the more opposition he will experience from Satan. And it is often the pastor's heart that is affected the most. It may be some criticism. It may be the lack of fruitfulness, the lack of visible signs of blessing. It may be the opposition of certain people. It may be the repeated falls of someone with whom the pastor has spent a great deal of time, and for whom he has prayed a great deal. It may simply be the oppression which Satan brings upon his heart. Whatever the cause, or causes, the ministry has seen many casualties at this point. The pastor will often understand the prayer of the man whose son was demon-possessed:

Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief (Mark 9:24b).

Often the pastor will be called upon to help others when he feels that he needs help himself. Spurgeon called these, "fainting fits." See Chapter XI in his Lectures To My Students. What should the pastor do when his own faith seems to be so weak? Should he refuse to help others until he can get himself back in shape?

We must never turn our people down when they need help. If we cannot see them immediately, we need to arrange to see them as soon as possible. The pastor will often find that, in ministering to other, he finds help for himself!

But what else can the pastor do when those times of depression and discouragement come upon his soul? Paul told Timothy to be an example to the believers "in faith" (1 Tim. 4:12).

- a. Examine his habit of Bible reading and prayer.
- b. Search his heart, and ask God to search his heart, for any sins, possibly any attitudes, which could be displeasing to the Lord (resentments, pride, etc.).
- c. What about reading the biographies of men of God, especially those who were pastors? What about devotional reading? The works of the Puritans are especially suited for pastors.
- d. A pastor should be able to share his need with his wife, and possibly with the men he works with. We do not need to hesitate to let our men know that we have problems, too. It will encourage them to come to us when they are going through similar times. And it will help them to know how to pray for their pastor.
- e. These are always times when the pastor needs to give himself more to prayer, and to waiting upon the Lord.

These times of discouragement may last, not just for days, but for weeks, and even months. However long they may be, the Lord has a purpose for them, and the pastor will always come through them stronger and better able to minister to his people in their discouragements.

6. His promptness.

A pastor should be a man of his word. He should be prompt in carrying out his responsibilities. His work is the most important work in the world, and he should carry it out so that his people will feel the same way about his work that he does.

7. His leadership and relationship with the church leaders (elders and deacons).

The pastor does not have men working for him; he has men who

work with him. He has co-workers. And he must treat them as fellow-servants of Jesus Christ. The pastor should value their ideas and seek their counsel, but he should always seek to guide them in doing the will of God with respect to the work. The work of the Lord requires patience on the part of all who are involved in it, and the pastor needs patience, too, as together with his men they all seek to know the will of God. Even with his elders and deacons, the pastor must remember that he is a shepherd to lead. These are men who ought to be remembered in prayer by the pastor most faithfully. The blessing of God upon the work will be seen, in a large measure, to the extent to which the leaders work together in unity and love.

C. THE PASTOR AND HIS STUDY -- THE PREPARATION OF HIS MESSAGES.

Since the main responsibility of the pastor is the edification of the saints, it follows that study must be given great priority by the pastor who wants to please the Lord and to experience His blessing. The demands of the ministry will often compete with the time that should be given to study, but this is where the pastor must be a good disciplinarian. The pastor who fails to study, fails to grow in his own Christian life, and his usefulness as a servant of the Lord will be greatly impaired.

However, recognizing this to be true, the pastor needs to realize that his sermon preparation can never be separated from his own devotional life, his personal fellowship with the Lord. E. M. Bounds, in his book, Preacher and Prayer, said, "Preaching is not the performance of an hour. It is the outflow of a life" (p. 7). Truer words were never spoken. The pastor is so closely identified with his message that, if there is coldness in his heart toward the Lord, there will be little blessing in preparing to preach, and little blessing in the preaching itself.

Thus, at this point it is good to review what has already been said about THE PASTOR AND HIS LORD.

1. The pastor's devotional life.

If the pastor is faithful in the reading of the Word of God for the nurturing of his own soul, and faithful in prayer, he will find much greater blessing in the preparation of his messages. The pastor is dependent upon the Holy Spirit for blessing as he searches the Scriptures in order to feed his people, and therefore it is important that he be in a proper relationship with the Lord. Often when the pastor is under pressure to prepare he will find special help is given to him by the Lord which will be directly related to his own faithfulness in reading the Word and prayer.

Much more could be said on this, but let the pastor, or the prospective pastor, know that his success or failure in the ministry may be determined right here. A man can be very faith-

ful in his study, but, if his heart is not right with the Lord, his study will not result in the kind of a ministry which will be spiritually profitable to his people.

2. Planning for the ministry of the Word.

a. The whole counsel of God. See Acts 20:27.

During the course of any man's pastorate he should keep in mind that his responsibility is to teach his people the whole counsel of God, that is, every part of the Word of God. He should not just teach the New Testament, but the Old Testament also. He should not just preach the Gospel, but should be helping his people with their spiritual lives. He will want to preach Bible history, but he will also need to give his people Bible prophecy--and so on.

Usually a pastor has more than one service a week. He should vary his messages for his different meetings, and faithfully seek the mind of the Lord concerning the different times during the week when he speaks.

This cannot be done in a year, or even two. It takes time to get into all of the Word of God. But this should be the pastor's goal in his ministry. He will want to preach through books of the Bible; at other times he will speak on special doctrines or themes. Every pastor should check himself to make sure that he is not neglecting any part or any doctrine of Scripture.

b. The spiritual needs of his people.

Every pastor needs to know where his people are in their relationship with the Lord. Sometimes their will be special needs to be addressed. It is not wise to preach sermons to particular people, but the pastor does want his ministry to be relevant for his people.

A pastor may go to a church where the people have not had much Bible teaching. In such a case his ministry would be quite different from the pastor who has been in a church many years and has had the privilege to leading his people along in their knowledge and understanding of the truth.

3. The actual preparation.

During the course of any man's ministry his procedure in study may undergo several changes. David could not go to war in Saul's armor, and neither can any pastor follow to the letter the methods of study of other men. But this is where the pastor needs to trust the Lord to guide him.

a. The pastor's own work.

Commentaries and books of sermons can be of great help to any pastor. And the pastor who does not use them is robbing himself of value help which can enrich his own soul and his ministry. But these should not be consulted first! The pastor is not to give just what the Lord has given to other men, but he is to get his message from the Lord. So he must take his Bible and study it first for himself, and then consult other helps afterwards.

b. Books of the Bible.

If a pastor is beginning to teach a book of the Bible, he should begin by getting himself as thoroughly acquainted with that book as it is possible for him to do. This means reading the book over and over, as many times as possible. He will also find it help to continue reading the book as often as possible while he is teaching it. Any section of a book takes on greater meaning if it is seen in the context of the whole book.

c. The text.

The pastor can go through a book and plan what his text will be for each week, or he may choose to plan his text Sunday by Sunday, when he is preaching through a book of the Bible. Whatever procedure he may choose to follow, he must seek to become thoroughly familiar with his text.

He will usually begin with the English text. But he must make sure that he has the meaning of the original text. Often words in Scripture have a different meaning from their use in daily conversation, and so the pastor must make certain that he understands what the writer actually said. It is best if the pastor goes through the text verse by verse in his study to make sure that the text is clear to himself.

At this point other books can be consulted--reference books or commentaries which deal with the original languages. There are some very helpful books available for those who do not know the Hebrew or the Greek, such as Wilson's Old Testament Word Studies, or Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words. But, as times goes on, the pastor would do well to acquaint himself with the original languages so he will be able to take advantage of the many other helps which are available.

d. The outline.

There is probably no way to determine is the meaning of a passage has been clearly understood than the ability to outline the passage. By the outline the pastor seeks to help his people to think through the passage of Scripture from which he is preaching. An outline is an excellent aid to

memory, both for the pastor as well as for the people who hear him. The pastor should aim to make the passage upon which he is preaching understandable to his people.

e. The content.

When the outline has been formed, then the pastor can proceed to fill in the substance of what he wants to give to his people. At this point he may want to consult commentaries and/or books of sermons. This will help him to check over what he has seen in his text, and to compare it with what others have seen. However, the main content should be what he has seen in the text before consulting others.

f. Illustrations.

The best illustrations are those which are taken from the Word of God. These will help to show the relationship which one passage of Scripture has with another.

But illustrations from Scripture are not the only illustrations which can be used. Spurgeon was especially gifted in this area, and it is very helpful to read his sermons, as well as Chapters XXIV through XXVIII in his book, Lectures to My Students. Donald Grey Barnhouse was also a master in the use of illustrations.

Illustrations have been called windows by which the light is permitted to enter. We have good examples of illustrations in the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ.

g. The application.

People need to be taught not only what the Word of God means, but also how it is to be used in their lives. When preaching the Gospel, or what teaching the saints, we should always pray that the Lord will give us fruit. Many times before the pastor applies the truth, the Spirit of God will make the application He desires in individual hearts. But still the pastor needs to apply the truth he has proclaimed. After applying, he will need to depend upon the Spirit of God to bless what he has said.

h. Doctrinal studies and other themes.

In preaching on doctrines or special subjects the pastor will not usually be limited to one passage of Scripture (although there may be times when he will). Ordinarily, however, it will be necessary to consult a number of passages of Scripture even though they may not all be used in preaching. A false understanding of any truth usually is the result of failing to consider all that the Word of God has to say on any particular doctrine.

D. THE PASTOR AND HIS PREACHING.

1. The content: the Word of God.

A pastor's preaching will reveal what he understands the nature of his calling to be. The preceding section has indicated that the pastor is to proclaim the Word of God. His preaching should be expository in character. This means that his messages should be designed to explain the meaning of the Biblical text. He is to learn through the teaching of the Holy Spirit the meaning of the Word, and then to show its application to the minds and hearts of the hearers.

Unfortunately much instruction in preaching dwells on the manner of the delivery rather than the content. When the manner or method of delivery becomes the important thing in the mind of the pastor, it may be easy for him to sacrifice content for the sake of making an impression through his method. The servant of the Lord must always give precedence to what he is preaching, rather than how it is being presented. When a man's heart is full of the Word of God and a desire for his people to understand that Word, the manner of his presentation will usually be appropriate and effective.

Every pastor needs to be examining his preaching continually to be sure that he is actually helping his people to understand the meaning of Scripture as it was originally given. Such passages as the following should be consulted frequently:

- 1) 2 Tim. 4:1-8.
- 2) Heb. 4:12.
- 3) Jas. 1:18 and 1 Pet. 1:22-25.
- 4) 1 Pet. 2:2, 3.
- 5) The preaching of the Apostles and others in the Book of Acts, e.g., Acts 2:14-36; 13:16-41.
- 6) The Epistles of the New Testament illustrate for us the character of apostolic preaching and teaching.
- 7) Reverting back to the Old Testament, we see from Moses on down to the last of the prophets that the character of their messages was often introduced by the phrase, "Thus saith the Lord."

The more the servant of the Lord is convinced of the sufficiency of the Word, the stronger will be his emphasis upon the preaching of the Word of God. It is not for us to say what preaching is; that is made clear in the Word of God.

2. His style.

It is often a great temptation for a young pastor to think more in terms of the manner of his preaching rather than the content (as has been mentioned above). This is not to say that style is not important, but it is to say that it should not be the pastor's first concern.

However, for the pastor who is beginning his work, it will be a great temptation to imitate the style of some prominent

pastor, or of some pastor he has heard who has been particularly effective in his work. If some pastor has been used by the Lord in the life of the young pastor, there may be even an unconscious tendency to imitate him.

A good illustration for style is found in the story of David and Goliath. See 1 Sam. 17:12-58. A pastor who imitates someone else, consciously or unconsciously, is like David going out to face Goliath in Saul's armor. Many a pastor has had to learn this lesson through unfortunate experiences. As in a pastor's manner of study, his method of preaching, his style, his delivery, may change, and hopefully will change, many times during his lifetime. But the important thing to remember is that you need to be yourself! Often awkward gestures and nervous habits in the pulpit are explained by a lack of experience. People will often make criticisms (not always kindly), and these should always be taken into consideration. There is always room for improvement with everyone. A faithful wife will often be a pastor's most helpful critic, and a wise pastor will listen to what she has to say. Even after a pastor has been in the work for years he may develop some distracting habit. So this is an important area that needs constant attention. The worst thing about a bad habit or some distracting manner of presenting the message is that it may hinder people from listening to what is being said.

But remember: If the pastor's heart is full of the Word, is full of the message that he has to give on any occasion and he is being empowered by the Holy Spirit, his style of delivery will fall into place.

In Spurgeon's Lectures to My Students, read Chapters VIII, IX, XIX, XX, and XXI.

3. His twofold purpose.

We are thinking here about the pastor's twofold purpose with regard to those who hear him. The primary purpose that every pastor should have is that his life, his preparation, and his preaching should be pleasing to the Lord. The pastor, like every other child of God, is to do all that he does, not for his own glory, but for the glory of God. A pastor who fails here, will not be greatly used when he thinks of the purpose that he has with regard to the people who hear him either on certain occasions or week by week. Usually if a pastor is failing manward, it is because there are problems in his relationship with God.

This twofold purpose has been covered before, but it needs to be kept in mind when we are dealing with the subject of the pastor's preaching.

a. The edification of believers.

This means that the people of God should be learning more

about the truth of Scripture, but it does not stop there. It also means that, when a Christian is being edified, he will manifest it by an increase of godliness, of holiness, in his (or her) life. Too often a pastor will be satisfied if his people are increasing in their knowledge of the Word, while ignoring the fact that their lives are not being changed for the better.

b. The salvation of sinners.

While it is usually true that unregenerate people do not attend church in significant numbers, yet there is always the possibility that some are there--even some who are very regular in their attendance at church. And this is a part of pastoral responsibility, to see that the Gospel receives proper attention in the ministry from the pulpit.

The pastor can often give helpful instruction, too, in his preaching, that will be of real assistance to his people in their individual witnessing throughout the week. This, too, is an evidence that the Lord is blessing the ministry of the Word to His people, that is, when the people of God not only get concerned about their unsaved friends and relatives, but when they are actually used by the Lord in bringing people to the saving knowledge of Christ.

Therefore, these two points not only indicate what a pastor's objectives should be with regard to people, but they will help him to evaluate before God the effectiveness of his ministry.

For Scriptures which teach the above points, cf. Eph. 4:11-16; Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Eph. 6:18-20; 1 Thess. 1:2-10.

E. THE PASTOR'S VISITATION AND COUNSELING.

In Spurgeon's sermon on Matthew 15:21 he said this:

It was very important that, during the short active lifetime of our Saviour--a little more than three years--He should confine His operation to a comparatively small district, so as to produce a permanent result there which would radiate over the whole world. He knew what was best for men, and therefore He restricted Himself to a very narrow area; and, my brethren and sisters, I am not sure that we are always wise when we want a great sphere. I have myself sometimes envied the man with about five hundred people to watch over, who could see them all, know them all, and enter into sympathy with them all, and so could do his work well. But, with so large a number as I have under my charge, what can one man do? (quoted in Spurgeon's Autobiography, Vol. II, p. 68).

It has been said that "a home-going pastor makes a church-going people." While this is not always true, yet there is a point here. If a pastor is to exercise oversight with his people, if he is to preach so as to help them in the use of the Word in their

daily lives, he must know them outside of the church. The interest that he shows in them individually will pay rich dividends in his ministry under the blessing of God. Therefore, visitation in the homes of his people and personal counseling of those who are facing special needs will usually prove to be most profitable.

An excellent book on pastoral work in the home is The Reformed Pastor, by Richard Baxter. While 17th century conditions in old England were very different from 20th century conditions in the United States, yet the book is rich in its suggestions as to how pastoral visitation can be made most profitable. While there certainly is a place for informal visitation, taking time to get acquainted with the members of a family, yet the pastor should never forget that he is the pastor, and always seek to make his visits spiritually profitable.

When it comes to counseling, a couple of words of caution should prove to be valuable.

Today there is an abnormal emphasis on counseling. Some pastors are even leaving the ministry to engage full time in a counseling ministry--and that with the charging of fees for "professional services." Often this is done within the local church. Or a pastor will obviously be neglecting his study and pulpit preparation because he is devoting so much time to counseling.

Several things can be said about this.

In the first place, the pastor should avoid being considered by his people as a "professional." Imagine such a label being used to describe our Lord in His ministry! Or imagine it being used of Paul or Peter or John. The pastor is a spiritual shepherd, a servant of the living God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. He does not set himself above his people, as is the case with the "professional," but below them. The pastor is the servant of his people.

Secondly, it is deplorable that Christian workers have gotten into the practice of charging for their services. When the Lord originally sent out His disciples, one of the things that he said to them was, "Freely ye have received, freely give" (Matt. 10:8b). Again, imagine the Lord or any of the apostles charging a fee from those who came for help. The servant of the Lord is to be supported by the people of God, but he is not to charge for his services, nor is it advisable that he require that a church pay him so much before he will agree to become the pastor. It was to Timothy that the Apostle Paul wrote,

For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows (1 Tim. 6:10).

Thirdly, it would seem that most pastors, particularly those who are devoting so much time to individual counseling, do not realize that, if they are faithfully teaching the Word, they are counseling! Therefore, the demand for counseling which is so prevalent today is a reproach upon what is going on in the pulpits of our churches.

The pastor who is a teacher ((Eph. 4:11b) will be counseling his people, helping to solve their problems, giving them guidance, as he teaches them the Word of God week after week. This does not mean that there will not be times when the pastor will have to take time with people individually, but it does mean that such time will be greatly reduced in number.

The other thing that a pastor needs to be careful about is the counseling of women.

In the first place, if a lady who seeks counseling is married to a Christian man, she should be encouraged to seek help from her husband. The pastor can encourage this in his regular ministry to his people, and should seek to minister to the men of the church so they will be able to help their wives and their children. The pastor and the other elders should be available to help the men so that they can help the members of their families, and others as well. See this principle in 1 Corinthians 14:35.

But there will be times when a woman will need to speak to her pastor--in the case, for example, of a marital problem. If the counseling is to be done in the church, the pastor should make sure that someone else is in the building at the time to avoid any possible criticism. If the pastor goes to the home of the woman he is to be, he should always have someone else with him--his own wife, or another man--unless he is sure that there are others who are in the home when he will be there. The pastor must always avoid every appearance of evil. Many pastors have gotten into sin in such circumstances when, particularly on repeated sessions together, they have gotten emotionally involved with the woman they have been counseling. The pastor should also be careful about probing into intimate matters as the very discussion of such things can lead to trouble.

My father, a businessman, once told me when I was first entering into the ministry, that there are three dangers which every pastor faces in the ministry, dangers which have brought about the ruin of many servants of the Lord: laziness, money, and women. This is very valuable information which the pastor should never forget. We are in conflict with a real enemy who will do all that he can to destroy our ministry. And so the pastor, in a special way, needs to exercise constant vigilance over his own life and circumstances.

However, recognizing all of the dangers and seeking to avoid them, much spiritual good can be accomplished through wise counsel given by a pastor to his people.

Special counseling, such as before marriage, and before and after funerals, will be discussed later.

F. THE PASTOR'S CORRESPONDENCE.

This is another avenue of ministry which is open to the pastor. The New Testament epistles teach us this in an unmistakable way. The apostles each enlarged and strengthened their ministries by

writing letters. Any pastor would do well to notice the content of the Epistles as a guide to his own correspondence. His letter writing should not be just to those who are outside of his congregation, but to his own people as well. It can often be a source of great encouragement to his people to receive a letter from the pastor.

The leader of a large mission was asked, "What, from a practical standpoint, do you attribute your success as the Director of your Mission?" He responded immediately by saying, "I kept up with my correspondence."

A busy pastor will always find it difficult to take time to write letters, but it is a very important part of his ministry. Spurgeon habitually devoted one whole day to letter writing.

Letters do not have to be long. In fact, a missionary who had a great ministry to people in her home country through correspondence from the country in which she was working, once remarked that the secret of keeping up with correspondence was to write short letters. A pastor may have a secretary to help him, but there will still be letters that he will want to write himself, and these often are the letters which mean the most to those who receive them.

G. The indoctrination of newcomers.

The doctrines of Scripture are foundational to the strength of any true New Testament church. The people of God must understand and believe the truths of God's Word, and then live their lives in obedience to Scripture.

Therefore, when new people come to the church and indicate a desire to be a part of the church fellowship, it is important that they understand the doctrines of the church. This can be done individually, with families, or in larger groups at the church. The last is usually more practical because it will take the least amount of time, and it can be just as effective as the other ways as long as the group does not become too large. There should be time given for questions from those in the group, and a simple exam can be given to make as sure as possible that the people have understood the doctrines which have been taught to them. The sessions for the newcomers should not be too numerous, and the teaching should not be too detailed--just enough to give the newcomers a basic understanding of the doctrines of the church.

It is not absolutely essential that the pastor conduct all of the classes for newcomers, but it is good if he can. It will give him an opportunity to get acquainted with the new people coming into the church. Occasionally people who are not Christians will express a desire to become a member of the church. They may profess to be Christians, but, in fact, are not. This is often discovered in the newcomers class, and then the pastor will be able to deal with them concerning their relationship to Christ.

H. Special ministries:

1. Baptism.

The Bible clearly teaches that baptism is only for those who have trusted Jesus Christ as Saviour, and that it is by immersion. The Scriptures also make it clear that baptism is not required for salvation, but it does teach that those who are saved should be baptized. These facts should be made clear to those desiring baptism, along with Scriptural support for them.

The pastor should ask each candidate for baptism to give his or her testimony regarding salvation. He should also ask the candidate why he wants to be baptized. This often opens the door for additional teaching. Questions will bring out deficiencies in a person's understanding which the pastor will then be able to clear up.

Baptism is a public declaration of one's faith in Christ. It is symbolic in nature, picturing the truth of Romans 6:3, 4.

The pastor should carefully instruct the candidate for baptism as to the procedure in the baptistry. Some people have a fear of water, and the pastor should seek to determine if this is the case with any person he is going to baptize. If it is, he should do all that he can to alleviate that fear.

The pastor will have to arrange for his own baptismal attire, and he will want to inform each person who is being baptized as to what he or she should wear when being baptized. Usually robes are provided by the church for the ladies and girls, and sometimes even for the men.

2. The Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is the ordinance of the church in which the people of the church remember the Lord in His death. Unlike baptism, which is observed by each person only once, the Lord's Supper is observed over and over again. Churches vary in the frequency with which they observe the Lord's Supper--sometimes quarterly, most often monthly, but many observe it every Lord's Day. The Lord's Supper should be observed regularly on Sunday evening to include those who are not able to attend the Sunday morning service.

The Lord's Supper can be observed after a service, or it can be incorporated into the service--meaning that the message would have to do specifically with the death of Christ.

The Lord's Supper consists of bread, representing the body of Christ, and grape juice, representing the blood of Christ. The bread is served first, followed by the cup. It should be made clear that only believers should participate. Some churches limit the observance of the Lord's Supper to their own members. This is called closed communion. But it is difficult to justify this position from Scripture. However, people should be warned about taking the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner as Paul did with the Corinthian church in 1 Corinthians 11:23-34. This would include either taking communion in a flippant, careless way, as well as observing the Supper with known sin in a person's life. The Lord's Supper was ordained by the Lord to promote holiness in the

lives of believers, to keep the church's ministry focused upon the death of Christ, and to cause the Lord's people to live in anticipation of the Lord's return.

It is not necessary for the pastor to be always involved in serving communion, but it should be under the supervision and oversight of the pastor and the other elders of the church.

Of course proper arrangements need to be made, usually with the ladies of the church, for the preparation of the elements each time the Lord's Supper is observed.

3. Baby dedication.

Fathers in particular are instructed in Scripture to raise their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). In order to express their intention to do this, parents will publicly present their children to the Lord in one of the services of the church. The pastor, before leading in prayer, will usually give a word of exhortation to the parents. This should include such matters as encouraging the parents to:

- 1) Live exemplary lives before their children.
- 2) Pray for their children.
- 3) Teach their children the Word of God.
- 4) Make sure that their children are regularly under the instruction of the Word in a Bible-believing church.

In churches where the people believe in believer's baptism, baby dedication does not include water for sprinkling or pouring (a type of baptism which has no support in Scripture). The dedication does not guarantee the child's salvation, but it does express the desire of the parents that they will do all within their power to teach the Gospel to their child, trusting the Lord to work in the child's heart, drawing him or her to Christ.

The practice of baby dedication goes back to practice of the Jews regarding the make children when they were taken to the Temple.

4. Weddings.

In the State of Oregon, any person who is going to perform a marriage ceremony must be registered with some county in the State. This usually means that the person, if a minister of the Gospel, must be ordained. If not, he must be authorized by the church or religious group of which he is a member. The pastor is required by law not to perform a marriage unless he is presented with a valid marriage license, and he is also required to report the wedding within thirty days after the marriage has been performed.

When a man and a woman come to the pastor wanting to be married, the pastor will want to determine certain things, such as, are both parties Christians, has either been married previously (if so, what were the circumstances of the divorce). Usually a pastor is safest in making sure that he is marrying those who are really following the Lord's will in doing so if he confines his weddings to those who are in his own church fellowship.

Once the pastor has agreed to perform the wedding, he will want to meet with the prospective bride and groom to make sure that they understand what the Bible teaches about marriage. He may want to prepare his own lessons for them and/or suggest books and articles about marriage for them to read. Care needs to be taken in making suggestions because not all Christian books are Christian in their emphasis and teaching.

After the sessions on marriage have been completed, the pastor will want to arrange with the couple the details of the wedding ceremony. It is very helpful to work out every detail ahead of time, and give each member of the wedding party a copy of the order of procedure for the wedding. The pastor usually has charge of the rehearsal, which is generally held the night before the wedding. He should begin by getting the wedding party together and going over the ceremony with them. Then the whole ceremony should be rehearsed with the exception of the pastor's message. It should be rehearsed more than once if that is the desire of the bride.

The pastor should get possession of the marriage license prior to the rehearsal, and have the best man and maid, or matron, of honor sign in the appropriate places. This must be returned to the county office within thirty days.

5. All of the special ministries of the pastor give him unique opportunities to contribute to the spiritual lives of his people. This is especially true of funerals.

When the pastor hears that someone in his congregation has died, he should make arrangements to be with the family of the deceased as soon as possible. They will want the pastor to help them, and usually the family will need guidance, especially if they have not had a death in the family before. Reading the Word with them, and praying, are especially important at such a time.

The family will usually want to select a time for the service which is convenient for the pastor, but sometimes the time will be set before talking to the pastor. Arrangements also need to be made for casket bearers and others who will be taking part in the service, such as a soloist, organist, etc.

When the pastor goes to the funeral home at the time of the service he will be asked to provide the funeral director with an order of service.

After the service the funeral director will assume the responsibility for dismissing the friends. The pastor should stand as the people by to view the body. After the guests are dismissed, the family will come in to view the body for the last time. This is usually a difficult time, and should be concluded by prayer. After that the pastor will lead the way as the casket is taken to the hearse.

The service at the cemetery should be very brief--Scripture reading and prayer. The pastor leads the casket to the burial place, and then should stay with the family until they are ready to leave. If he is riding with the funeral director, he may have to leave before the family goes.

V. The Pastor and His Work in the Church.

I. Church Finances.

Like every other phase of the work of the church, giving in the Lord's work is uniquely different from the procedures which are generally followed in the world. And yet it must be said that the financial policies of churches often reflect more of the ways of the world than they do the teaching of the Word of God. Many times the men who are chosen to oversee the finances of the church are chosen for their ability in business rather than for their spiritual qualities and their understanding of what the Bible teaches about money and the work of the Lord. When a pastor goes into an established church, he may find that some strong, unbiblical policies have been in practice for a long time. If so, he will need to exercise patience, and gradually teach his men what the Word has to say on this subject. If a new work is being started, the pastor has an excellent opportunity to get the work started in the right way.

Therefore, the pastor should make sure that he understands the teaching of Scripture about New Testament giving.

The following are things which the pastor should carefully consider:

1. New Testament giving.

Two of the more important passages are 2 Corinthians 8, 9, and Philippians 4:10-20.

2. The difference between New Testament giving and Old Testament giving.

This is a major difference between God's dealings with Israel about the support of the Temple and the priests, as compared with the teaching that we have in the New Testament Epistles with regard to giving in the Church. Tithing is not taught in the New Testament.

3. The difference between New Testament giving and the world's way of doing business.

The New Testament does not sanction asking for pledges, nor using the various fund-raising techniques which are so popular today.

4. New Testament giving and debt in the church.

Hudson Taylor, the founder of the China Inland Mission, used to say, "God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply." The provision that the Lord makes for His work is one way He has of setting limits upon what He wants done. This was the conviction of George Müller concerning his orphan work in Bristol, England. (The writings of both of these men should be recommended reading for all pastors in connection with finances in the Lord's work.)

5. New Testament giving and faith.

Often church leaders will encourage their people to move ahead with some project, like the construction of a building, on the basis that they believe it to be the will of God, and that the Lord will provide. Many times such action has proven to be not the will of God, and the people are saddled with a heavy financial burden which can seriously hinder the blessing of the Lord. Faith should be exercised in trusting the Lord to provide first. Then both the pastor and his people can move ahead, having seen the Lord provide. (This, of course, is true only if the Word of God has been followed in the way the funds have been provided.)

6. New Testament giving and prayer.

All that we have seen thus far indicates that the Lord has ordered the financial affairs of His work so that His people will recognize their dependence upon Him to provide. And this dependence is always to be expressed to the Lord in prayer.

7. Who should give?

While there are some examples in Scripture when some provision has been made for the Lord's work through people who do not know the Lord, and while there also might be circumstances today in which the Lord might provide for His work through people who are not Christians, yet the Scriptures teach most clearly that it is God's usual way of providing for His work when His people give.

The pastor should carefully consider how Scriptural it is to take offerings during the church service where unbelievers are present and may feel that they are doing a meritorious thing by giving.

Under no condition should non-Christians be solicited to give to the work of the Lord any more than Christians should be solicited to give.

8. The pastor and church finances.

The pastor should realize, as has already been stated, that he is responsible to teach New Testament giving. He should also be careful to see that the financial policies of the church are conducted in a way that is pleasing to the Lord (which means that they are conducted according to the Word of God). He and the elders need to be overseers in this area as well as in all other areas of the work.

As a general rule, the pastor should not be one to sign church checks. Money is one area where a pastor needs to be extremely cautious. There have been pastors whose ministries have been adversely affected because they had too much to do with the dispensing of church funds.

9. The pastor and his support.

It is becoming a common practice, even in evangelical churches, for pastors to circulate resumes, and to state what salary they need to receive, or expect to receive. It ought to go without saying that this is a bad practice. The pastor needs to trust the Lord to meet his needs, and to trust the Lord to guide his people as to what they will give him for his personal needs.

V. The Pastor and his work in the church.

J. Missions -- at home and in foreign countries.

The Bible clearly teaches that the local church is to be continually involved in spreading the Gospel message throughout the world. This includes the community in which the church is located, the state, the nation, and to other nations, as the Lord shall lead. The Bible does not really distinguish between home and foreign missions. The world, all of it, at home and abroad, is the mission field.

Cf. Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Acts 13:1-5; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21.

Missions must be understood as the accomplishment of the purposes of God as a sovereign work of God. Before the foundation of the world God chose those who will be saved. Cf. 2 Thess. 2:13; Eph. 1:4. Those whom God has ordained for salvation are being drawn by God to Christ through the preaching of the Gospel. Cf. John 6:37, 44. It is through the Word that the elect are saved since faith comes as a gift from God through the Word of God. Cf. Eph. 2:8, 9; James 1:18; Rom. 10:17. It is the responsibility of those in the church to preach the Gospel; God then blesses and uses it as He has planned. Cf. Isa. 55:10, 11. Therefore, an understanding of the doctrines of grace and a firm belief in the sovereignty of God are the great encouragements held out to the church for the task of preaching Christ in the world. The more the leaders of the church, and the people, understand the doctrine of salvation, the greater will be their desire to reach the people of the world with the message of salvation.

In what ways can the pastor lead his people to become involved in the work of missions?

1. The preaching of the Gospel in the local church.

Although the church is primarily for the edification of the people of God, there is a very definite place for preaching the Gospel in the church. It will be instructive to the saints, inspirational for their own witness, and, as is often the case, it may result in someone being drawn to Christ who has been attending church, but is not saved.

Note how much space in the New Testament Epistles is given to the Gospel although those letters were written to churches.

2. The pastor's encouragement for his people to witness, and his help for them in knowing how to do it.

This can come through the Word, through the biographies of Christians whom the Lord has used in the proclamation of the Gospel, and books written on this subject, such as, True Evangelism, by Lewis Sperry Chafer, and Tell the Truth, by Will Metzger. But special care should be taken in the selection of such books because, it is safe to say, the majority of books written on evangelism in the present day are more humanistic in their approach than biblical. There is no method that man has devised which will replace the work of the Spirit using the Word of God through the people of God.

3. Assisting other churches.

By this we do not mean cooperative, mass evangelism. By assisting other churches is meant strengthening them with counsel, in some cases assisting them in obtaining a pastor, and also in giving financial help until such time that the needy church can become self-supporting.

Whenever assistance is given, doctrinal purity must not be overlooked. One of the problems with mass evangelism as it is carried on today is that churches of many doctrinal persuasions are brought together, but in order to keep the various groups happy there must be doctrinal compromise. This will only grieve the Spirit of God, and lessen the effectiveness of the outreach.

4. Starting new churches.

Since the Lord has ordained that His people be brought together in local assemblies called, churches, and has committed to His people a world-wide mission, it follows that the more good churches there are (good in a Biblical sense), the greater will be the outreach to the world.

The Lord seems to be working in a special way in our day in bringing people together who have had their eyes opened to the doctrines of grace. Pastors who really teach the grace of God are running into difficulty when seeking to preach the grace of God in established churches. Therefore, new churches are springing up everywhere, and there will be the need for more in the days to come. Simply to have more churches is not the answer. As far as churches as such are concerned, there are too many already. But we do need pastors, elders, deacons, and their people who will faithfully exalt the Lord in preaching the Gospel of the grace of God. Such churches will eventually have a great effect, with God's blessing, on the ministry of the Body of Christ to the whole world.

5. Supporting foreign missionaries.

a. The missionary: an extension of the local church's ministry.

The church should support only those who give genuine evidence of being saved, who also have definitely been called of God, and gifted for the work, and those who are doctrinally in agreement with the sending church.

b. The missionary, the responsibility of the local church, and responsible, under God, to the local church.

It is no more biblical for a missionary to "raise his support" than it is for a pastor to raise his support. This is the church's responsibility when the leaders and the people are as assured as they can be of the leading of the Lord. It seems to be most according to Scripture, if possible, for a missionary to be supported by one church. This places a greater burden on the church, and simplifies the missionary's furlough time.

c. The missionary and prayer.

As in every other phase of the work of the Lord, the pastor should encourage the missionary through the Word, and by prayer. The church should be continually encouraged to pray for the missionary, his family, and particular requests which the missionary may send to the church. Nothing will be more encouraging to a missionary than to know that he has people at home who are faithfully remembering him in prayer.

d. The missionary and correspondence.

There is a real ministry in letter-writing. This, too, along with prayer, will strengthen the missionary in his trials and in the difficulties which he faces in his work day by day.

PASTORAL STUDIES

Chapter 6

The Pastor and His Trials

To be involved in serving the Lord is the greatest honor that can be conferred upon anyone, but there is no work in which there are so many trials connected with the work. The trials should not, however, be looked upon as hindrances, but as helps, because they keep the pastor mindful of his constant need to trust the Lord.

When the Lord told Ananias to go to the Apostle Paul just after Paul had been saved to tell him about God's will for his life, the Lord concluded with these words, "For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake" (Acts 9:16). For Paul this meant great physical persecution and suffering, but a reading of the Book of Acts and the Pauline Epistles shows that he had other kinds of suffering as well-- physical ailments, disappointment in his fellowworkers, opposition from within the churches, and so on. In fact, there is nothing better for the preparation of a pastor for his work in anticipating the difficulties that he will experience in his work than to read the Scriptures. The Old as well as the New Testament are most enlightening along this line.

Perhaps no two pastors would approach this subject the same way. His ideas about pastoral trials would certainly be affected by his own experience. But, with the exception of a difference in emphasis, the following areas would probably be included by most pastors:

- 1) The trials a pastor experiences with himself.
- 2) The trials of a pastor and his family.
- 3) The trials of a pastor with his people in the church.
- 4) The pressures upon a pastor from outside sources.
- 5) The trials of a pastor in his relationship with God. A part of these trials could be considered under the first point.

A. The pastor himself.

1. A feeling of inadequacy.

It may take some time for this to appear, but it will come. Usually a man enters upon his first pastorate with great expectations of what he is about to see the Lord do, only to become more and more disappointed as time goes on and he does not see what he expected to see. Obviously the Lord has to deal with that feeling of self-confidence if the pastor is to become a useful instrument in the hand of the Lord. But the pendulum often makes a full swing from great expectation to great discouragement and depression. This is one of the greatest reasons that some men go from one pastorate to another, and then to another. It is the reason why many have left the ministry altogether. It is interesting to see how many young pastors are in churches, facing situations which seem designed to break them. Their self-image is being reshaped by the hand of the Lord.

2. Physical limitations.

The pastor never is able to do all that he would like to do. Sometimes he is hindered by health problems. As life goes on he feels the pressure of his limitations because he is a human being even more. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels," the Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians

4:7a. Paul had his thorn in the flesh. See 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. But we also see in these verses why he had that physical problem--that the power of Christ might rest upon him.

As the pastor gets older, and life gets shorter, his soul may be tried because he seems to be able to accomplish even less than before. In such a case he should remember the statement made by one of the Puritans to the effect that when we cannot do what we would like to do, or had hoped to do, we should do all that we can do.

3. Lack of consistency.

This may be seen in his personal fellowship with the Lord, in his diligence in his work, in his enthusiasm for the work, and in his faith concerning the future of the work.

Sometimes this is due to having too many things to do. Often a pastor will try to do more than he can do, or should do. He grows weary in body and soul, and it is a time of discouragement for him. If he has not been faithful in his personal fellowship with the Lord, he may feel that what he needs is to work harder (which may be true), but he will not see the blessing that he would like to see if his spiritual resources are not being replenished

B. The pastor and his family.

The greatest joy that a pastor can have is to see that his children are walking in the truth. See 3 John 4. In the same way, his greatest sorrow will be that his children are not walking in the truth. Often a pastor will be so busy with the family of God that he neglects his own family. He does not spend time with them. He does not teach them. He may not pray for them faithfully. He may overlook the trials and testings that they have. Often a pastor and his wife can be estranged from each other while seeking to serve the Lord. In the words of the bride in the Song of Solomon, "They made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept" (S. of Sol. 1:6).

A qualification of an elder is that he would have "faithful children, not accused of riot or unruly" (Tit. 1:6). To Timothy Paul wrote that an elder must be "one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)" (1 Tim. 3:4, 5). These are not just qualifications for a man to enter the ministry, but also for him to continue in the ministry.

C. The pastor and the people in his church.

Since the pastor's work is with the people where he with the other elders has oversight, it is to be expected that many of his trials will arise from his contact with them.

Some of these are:

1. Those who only show a casual interest in the Word of God.

These may be people who only come once a week. They are people in whose lives there is very little observable growth. They sit under the Word, but they do not learn very much at all. In seeking to help them with

their problems, the pastor finds them resistant to the teaching of Scripture. Doctrine is not important to them. They express that they are only interested in what is practical, but this is the area where their failures and their needs are most apparent.

2. People who leave the church.

This can be for various reasons. Sometimes it is because of the explanation given by John in 1 John 2:19. A person who is not a Christian will not be satisfied with the ministry of the Word. They always feel that there are other things that the church ought to be doing--sports, parties, outings, musical performances, etc.

Sometimes people leave because they have had trouble with someone in the church. People leave because of problems within their own families. People leave because they do not feel that they are appreciated as they should be by the people of the church.

Whatever the cause may be, it is always hard to see people go. The pastor's aim with regard to his people should be to "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. 1:28b). Therefore, it is always hard to see people leave, and, depending upon how well-known and well-liked the person or persons who depart may be, it is often disruptive for the other people of the church. At such times it is a great temptation to the leadership to compromise in some way with the policies which have been established in the church, but this cannot be. The pastor must stay true to his convictions regarding the nature of the church and its ministry, but he must also be careful to do it in a way that would be pleasing to the Lord and honoring to His Name.

3. People who remain the same spiritually year after year.

This is the Christian who does not grow. He may be very regular in his attendance and even active in the work of the church, but he always has the same problems and is guilty of the same sins (although he does not usually think of them as sins).

4. People who deliberately sow discord.

See Proverbs 6:16-19, especially v. 19b.

They are critical of the work, and seek to get others to agree with them. No work is perfect, and so it is easy for people who are of this disposition to find something to criticize. This type of person breeds disunity in the fellowship of the church, and can cause major problems if he is allowed to continue with his pernicious ways. Therefore, the pastor cannot ignore such a problem, but it is time-consuming and heart-breaking work. In cases where a person refuses to change or to leave, it may be necessary for church discipline to be exercised. But such tasks are never pleasant. Pride is always the reason a person sows discord.

D. The pressures on a pastor from outside sources.

We live in a day when the center of the Lord's work has been moved from the local church where the Lord placed it, to what is called, the para-church organization. "Para" is a Greek preposition which means something outside and yet beside, along side. These are youth organizations,

mission organizations, the countless numbers of seminar groups, evangelists and their organizations, Christian schools, and the like. They are usually not under the authority of any church, and so responsible to no church. However, they exercise a great deal of pressure on pastors and churches, and have had more to do with setting the tone of the Lord's work in recent years than churches have had. A pastor who does not go along with these groups, especially when most churches are cooperating, is soon characterized as not being interested in evangelism, or whatever the case may be.

This can be a great trial to a pastor, but he must, along with the other elders, stand by the guidance that the Lord has given them for their work. Para-church organizations come and go. A particular emphasis among the Lord's people will come and go. The church must remain firm in its stand for the Word of God and the ways of the Lord which are revealed in the Word. But this is never easy. It requires a great deal of enabling grace from the Lord Himself.

E. The trials of a pastor in his relationship with God.

A young pastor may enter the ministry with a great deal of zeal and confidence of being blessed and used by God, but, if his heart is set on doing God's will for the glory of God, he will soon learn that he must be a man given to prayer. The pastor can be gifted as a speaker, diligent in his preparation, have a good relationship with his people, but, if the blessing of God is lacking, none of those other things will be able to make up the difference. The words of the twelve Apostles in Acts 6:4 give guidance to the pastor who seeks God's blessing: "But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word"--and it has to be in that order: first, prayer; then, the ministry.

But in this matter the pastor will find some of his most severe testings.

1. The problem of "busy-ness."

No pastor ever has his work finished (until the Lord takes him to heaven). There is always something else that he could be doing--and after that, something else! This is true even in very small churches. Some men feel that the greatest virtue in the ministry is "busy-ness," but that is not true. A busy pastor is a joy to behold, but not if he is so busy that he is not taking the time for quiet meditation on the Word, and prayer. When the pressure of duties is upon the pastor, the easiest thing to neglect is prayer. Prayerlessness is probably the greatest sin in the ministry today--and it has probably always been that way. A pastor will go about his work with a guilty conscience if he is neglecting his time with the Lord, but it often goes on throughout a pastor's entire life.

One pastor has on the wall of his study: "Beware of the barrenness of a busy life." Luther evidently was often heard to say, on the other hand, "I am so busy that I must pray." Every pastor faces the question of priorities every day. Prayer must always remain at the top of the list.

2. Unanswered prayer.

Every Christian finds (and the pastor is not exempt from this) that God does not immediately answer his prayers when he opens his eyes and gets up

from his knees. Often the answer to prayer is delayed for days, or for weeks, or even months--sometimes for even years! And this is the case when it seems that the need is urgent, and the answer should not be delayed a moment.

This is a great trial to a pastor. And it is here that the pastor faces the temptation to do something himself "if God is not going to do something."

But here is where he needs strength to be strong enough to wait. He needs to experience what Paul was praying about in Colossians 1:11:

Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power,
unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness.

The Lord has reasons for not answering when we think He should. A part of that is to keep us praying, to strengthen our fellowship with Him. He wants us to trust Him when it may seem that a whole work will be destroyed if He does not do something now. Unanswered prayer is a great trial, but it has even greater purposes for the pastor who will quietly wait upon God.

3. God's desertions.

Unanswered prayer may be either preceded or followed (or both) by what the Puritans called, God's desertions. They found this to be such a major way in which God dealt with them that this was an outstanding subject in their writings. By God's desertions they meant those times in a man's ministry, often protracted times, when it seems that God has turned and gone away, leaving the pastor to labor in vain. Perhaps it is manifest by the successes of those who are opposed to a pastor and the work that he is doing. More people may be leaving the church than are coming into the church. It may be that no one is being saved. All of this can be especially distressing to a pastor when it comes after he has experienced a time of noticeable blessing upon his ministry.

What must a pastor do in such times?

This is when he needs to remember that "it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor. 4:2). He must continue to pray. He must continue to prepare his messages diligently. He must continue in his ministry just like he would if the heavens were opened, and blessings were being showered upon him and his people. But this is not easy; in fact, it is a great trial--like what Job experienced beyond what most pastors ever have to go through. Many of David's Psalms are Psalms in which he cries out as one who has been deserted by God. See Psa. 10:1; 13:1, 2. See also Psalm 22 which was not only David's experience but also prophetic of the "desertion" which our Lord experienced on the Cross. So He knows how the pastor feels when the pastor's circumstances seem to indicate that the Lord has deserted him. See Heb. 4:14-16.

The first and greatest help that a pastor will have during such a time in his life and ministry will come from such passages in the Word of God. He will learn then, as in no other time or way, that he walks by faith, not by sight (see 2 Cor. 5:7). But help also will come through the writings of godly men, especially the Puritans, who have gone through such times, and have learned that the Lord is very gracious. Good biographies are also helpful. But it will also be true that the Lord

will give help from time to time, through His Word, through people who come along with encouragement even though they may not know what the pastor is going through, or through letters that come at the very time they are needed. All of this is proof that the Lord does not actually desert His servants, or any of His people; He simply withholds the manifestation of His presence and His blessing for a time, to deepen His own work in the hearts and lives of His people.

But such a time as this can be a great trial to the pastor.

CONCLUSION.

However, in spite of the trials which are, in some respects, peculiar to the ministry, and in other respects, experiences like all of God's people have in varying degrees, yet the work of the ministry is the most wonderful work a man can be called to do. The man who is truly called of God would gladly give a hundred lives to the Lord, if he had them to give, than to be occupied in any other work. The pastor of a large church in the south once said that he would rather do what he was doing without pay than to be paid for doing anything else.

True, the pastor will have his trials, often very great. And yet the Lord is faithful. His will is always best. His wisdom is inerrant. His blessings are most satisfying, and the rewards He gives are eternal. His object in His dealings with the pastor are always for the pastor's eternal good, and for His own glory. The Lord is to be trusted at all times, and in every situation. It may be that only in heaven the pastor will fully understand God's dealings in his life, but he can be sure that he will know then, and will be in perfect agreement with all that God has done with him, and in him.

CHURCH HISTORY AND THE MINISTRY

DEFINITION: Church History is the study of the growth and development of Christianity from Pentecost to the present.

IMPORTANCE:

1. It is the story of Divine Providence.
"And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock (Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God) I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18).
2. It is the story of Christianity.
"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

STRUCTURE:

1. The History of Events
 - a. General Survey - An overview of the significant events of the past which pertain to the history of the church.
 - b. Specific Events - An investigation into a particular period of church history.
 - c. Biography - A study of a particular person who played a role in church history.
2. The History of Doctrine
 - a. General Survey - An overview of the development of Christian thought throughout the entire history of the church.
 - b. Historical Writings - The writings of the past which were formative in the development of Christian thought.
 - c. Creeds - The statements of belief from religious councils and leaders in the past.

RELEVANCE:

1. Church History is a source of learning.
2. Church History is a source of protection.
3. Church History is a source of inspiration.