

The Purpose of the Church

Rom 10:14-15 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!"

As we come to the third and final part of this series, what we find here in this passage is that God has ordained the church, and the means whereby the church is to proclaim the gospel. To properly understand the purpose of the church one must be aware that the church is not a man made organization. Rather it is a body established by God and it exists for two purposes; First, to glorify God and the second to edify the elect of God. Now I use the term "elect of God" for this includes those who are not yet redeemed but who the church will in time reach through the preaching of the gospel. We come now, as I mentioned to the last part, "How shall they hear without a preacher?" Thus this morning we will consider the office of the teaching elder in the church. First we shall see that it is an office established by God, and then we shall consider the duties of a pastor.

How shall they hear without a preacher?

A. The office of teacher/elder was established by God

*Eph 4:11-12 And **He Himself** gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,*

1. Now we know that the office of the apostle no longer exists in the church
2. With the close of the apostolic age there is no longer a need for the prophet in the church since the canon of Holy Scripture is complete.
3. But the one office in the church that continues down to this day is the office of the pastor/teacher.
 - a. Titus was instructed to ordain elders in the churches - "*appoint elders in every city as I commanded you.*" (Titus 1:5)
 - b. Timothy was instructed by Paul to continue this office through a teaching program

2 Tim 2:2 And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

B. Duties of the pastor/teacher or teaching elder

1. Proclaiming God's Word

2 Tim 4:2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

- a. Note the solemnity of this charge

2 Tim 4:11 charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:

- b. In season or out of season
 - (1) Whether it is desired or despised - proclaim it
 - (2) Time will come when men will not endure sound doctrine
- c. Correct, Reprove, and exhort
 - (1) That's what the Bible is all about
 - (2) Correcting error, correcting individuals in error,
 - (3) Challenging the saints to be faithful

2 Tim 3:16-17 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

d. Proclaiming the Gospel to the lost

- (1) Telling the sinner of his condition
- (2) Of His need
- (3) And of the provision through Christ Jesus

e. Longsuffering, in another place he is to be gentle

- (1) God doesn't give the pastor a sledgehammer
- (2) Gentleness of teaching the Word
- (3) Example of our God - longsuffering He was with Israel of old
He could have cast off Israel in the wilderness
He could have cast off David - sinful act
He could have dumped Peter for denying Him - feed my sheep

Jesus instruction - feed my sheep

Brings us to the next matter before us

2. *Shepherding the flock - 1 Peter 5:2-3 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock;*

a. Leading the flock

b. Serving as an overseer, that is, one who watches over the flock of God

- (1) Not a light matter for it is a flock God has purchased with His own blood. (cf. Acts 20:28)
- (2) Paul's warning - wolves will enter not sparing the flock (cf. Acts 20:29)
- (3) Time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine
- (4) This is the necessity of faithful pastor contending for the faith once delivered

c. Feeding the flock

- (1) The pastor is not a lecturer
- (2) The pastor is a teacher
- (3) His textbook must be the Holy Scripture

3. Never as a "lord over" but humbly by example

CONCLUSION: You may be thinking this is something a seminary class of pastors to be

Or maybe a lecture for a seminar of pastors, or a message at a synod

Shared this with you so you might understand the purpose of the church

The responsibility of the pastorate

And finally, that you might know how to pray for your pastor that he would be a faithful servant of God

And that you might have a better understanding of what we are to be as the Church of the Living God here in Northwest Arkansas

May God indeed help us to be a faithful witness to His glory and praise