



“The Profile of a Pastor”

Idea: The pastor is the God-called steward of Christ’s church.

Intro: If you are reading through the Bible with us this year, then this morning you should have read the account of Saul’s anointing as the king of Israel (1 Sam 10-11). He was called to be the king, proclaimed the king, and later anointed as the king. This morning is a special moment for us as a church. Like Israel, we too are setting aside men for leadership. Now, no one is being anointed king, but we are announcing and celebrating the call of God on their lives. These men are God’s gift to His church, so I want you to hear what the Apostle Paul says about the gifts God has given to the church.

11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. – Ephesians 4:11-14

The Lord has chosen and gifted to His church spiritual leaders who shepherd. They feed, guide, and protect the people of God, so they might grow up to maturity in Christ. Today is a special day for us. We get to recognize this provision and gift that God has given to our church. This morning we are commissioning James Ambrose as one of our deacons. He serves in our worship, hospitality, and small group ministries. We are also licensing Nate West to the ministry. He serves as our Associate Pastor of Students. Finally, we are ordaining Ricky Johnson to the ministry. He serves as our Associate Pastor of Worship and Media.

Many of you know James and his wife Kristine; they have been a member of RL for a number of years. They have one son and a daughter on the way. Nate is our newest and youngest staff member. He comes from a great family and a great church right here in the metro area. Nate came to Christ and was called to vocational ministry while in college. Ricky is married to Katy, and together they have six children. He came to Christ at the age of 10. Right out of high school he started playing piano as a member of the band for his former church (FBC Fort Worth), while going to college to become a band director. It was not long till the Lord began to change the course of Ricky’s plans. He began to sense a calling toward vocational ministry. During this time, he was given the opportunity to become the worship pastor at FBC Fort Worth. Ricky surrendered to the Lord’s calling on his life. He was licensed to the ministry and served that great church for twelve years. This past year God began to direct he and Katy’s hearts to a new opportunity. Thankfully, He directed them to Red Lane, and we have been tremendously blessed by their love for the Lord and leadership over the worship and media ministries.

Inquiry: It is likely that many of you have not witnessed an ordination service and are wondering, “What is ordination?” It is the process whereby the local church expresses its affirmation of the calling of God upon the life of the pastor. Every denomination acknowledges God’s call and approval of its pastors and leaders in different ways. In many churches and denominations, the first step is licensing the person, to be followed subsequently by ordination.

In a Southern Baptist church, a license means, “You tell us God has called you into full-time Christian ministry and we believe you.” An ordination means, “We have had time to observe you, and we also believe God has called you.” The first says, “We believe you believe it;” the latter says, “We believe it.”

Thankfully, those whom God calls He gifts and equips for the work of ministry. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance. In other words, God does not change His mind about planning to use the individual.

He intended to do so before birth (Jer 1:5). Likewise, God does not make mistakes, so He never calls the wrong person. The ordination process is a way for the church to express its affirmation of God's calling of the pastor.

The Bible depicts the pastor as a special and important gift to the church. He is a God-called steward of Christ's church. This morning let's look at the profile of a pastor laid out by Paul to Timothy.

First Timothy, Second Timothy, and Titus are commonly referred to as the "pastoral epistles" because they are addressed to pastors of churches and outline their pastoral duties. Basically, their responsibilities were twofold: to defend sound doctrine and maintain sound discipline. A lapse in those two main areas is how a church most often gets itself in trouble. History is replete with examples of this. We have seen this in recent years among the mainline denominations in our own nation as cultural agendas are embraced and sound doctrine is replaced with political correctness and self-help talks. It is here that we clearly see the necessity for a true shepherd, one who will feed, guide, and protect the flock of God. How does the shepherd (ποιμήν) watch over the church? There are three things we need to see in this profile of a pastor.

1. The pastor pursues the Word.

Disciples of Christ are persons of the Word. This should be no surprise because we are a Bible-people. Obviously, this is equally true of the pastor. Paul charged Timothy, "*Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching...Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress*" (1 Tim 4:13, 15). He further charged Timothy, "*Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth*" (2 Tim 2:15).

The pastor has nothing of his own to offer the wounded and hurting. He has no ability to break down the wall of the proud and boastful. Likewise, he is powerless to confront the wisdom of this age. The pastor does have the Word of God though, and it is sufficient. It was all Timothy had to confront the challenges of pastoring a church in the large, diverse, religiously complex, and flourishing city of Ephesus.

Paul exhorted Timothy to pursue the Word. He was to first pursue it personally so that it might overflow to others corporately. Paul understood that the pastor can never take his people any further than he has already gone. The pastor pursues the Word.

2. The pastor practices the Word.

Belief is proven by practice. In other words, if you say you believe something, the proof of it will be made evident when you put it into practice. The pastor is to pursue the Word of God. He is to know it, believe it, and practice it. This is vitally important when recognizing those whom God has called to Christian ministry.

For this reason, Paul instructed Timothy as to the qualifications of those who shepherd His people (1 Tim 3:1-7). The one who aspires to the office of pastor must be:

- above reproach
- a faithful husband
- sober-minded
- self-controlled
- respectable
- not a drunkard
- gentle
- not a lover of a money

- managing his house well

Paul expands this call to practice the Word in 2 Timothy 2:22-26. The pastor who practices the Word is able to model and help others be built up and escape the snares of the Enemy. These qualifications are basically the same for deacons.

The pastor pursues the Word, and the pastor practices the Word.

3. The pastor preaches the Word.

The pastor is called first and foremost to be a preacher of the Word. He is a proclaimer of the gospel. He is not called to be a community organizer, a social worker, or a motivational speaker. Those things might be encompassed in his work, but preaching is the pastor's priority. Therefore, the pastor's devotional time with God, personal study, and credibility of life all work together to enhance the public preaching ministry.

This emphasis on preaching was Paul's final charge to Timothy.

Read 2 Timothy 4:1-5.

The pastor's life revolves around the Word of God. He is to be ready in season and out of season to expose (ἐλέγχω), rebuke (ἐπιτιμῶ), and encourage (παρακαλέω) the people of God. This is how he shepherds the church, feeding, guiding, and protecting the flock.

Conclusion: Pastors and deacons are divine gifts to the church. They tend to the flock, caring for the spiritual welfare of God's people. They also teach the flock, feeding a steady diet from the richness of God's Word. These work in tandem to develop and grow the church into maturity and the fullness of Christ (Eph 4:13).

Are you grateful for God's gift to the church? I know I am thankful for the pastors the Lord has used to influence my life. I have been tremendously blessed by the ministry of Dr. Ronnie Floyd, Dr. Johnny Hunt, Brett Pitman, and Dale Thompson.

Now, that we understand what this moment is about, let's recognize and celebrate God's gifts to His church by commissioning James as one of our deacons, licensing Nate to the ministry, and ordaining Ricky to the ministry.

Deacon commissioning: Invite James to the platform and pray over him, setting him apart to the work God has called him to.

Pastor licensing: Invite Nate to the platform and pray over him, thanking God for His call and asking for this call to become evident to all. Present certificate.

Pastor ordination: Invite Ricky to the platform.

Ordination Charge: Be careful to preach faithfully the Word of God; pray earnestly for each of the members, and especially to seek the assistance of the Holy Spirit as you pray; love people deeply as you would your Lord; seek earnestly the "fruit of the Spirit;" and function always with a deep sense of stewardship of the people of God, whom He purchased with His own blood and loves as His treasured possession.

Ordination Prayer: Invite all elders and deacons to lay hands on and pray over Ricky.

Certificate Presentation: Present certificate and Ricky's grandfather's Bible.