

LESSON ESSENTIALS

PASTORAL BASICS

LESSON 2: THE PASTOR AS TEACHER

Pastors, as you seek to teach your congregation, where will you get your material? Are you trusting in your own wisdom or that of other men? Or are you turning to the Word of God and seeking the wisdom of the Holy Spirit?

Whether through sermons, one-on-one instruction, or by daily living, the pastor is always instructing his congregation. The pastor is a teacher, whether by intention or by default. What kind of teacher will you be?

When pastors fulfill their role of 'feeding the sheep' they are providing the congregation with 'true Manna,' that is, the very Bread of life – the Word of God.

When you feel weak in your ability to stand firm and to speak loudly, trust the Lord to powerful speak through the truth of His Word.

Not too long ago in the Church's history, the leadership held a stubborn grip on who was trusted to understand the scriptures and to teach them. The laypeople were kept illiterate and sermons were preached in unfamiliar languages so that the Church leadership could exercise control over the congregation.

Clearly, there is no Biblical precedent for this type of behaviour. The Bible obviously states that there will be teachers, and that the Word should be communicated to the people in a way that they understand. From using parables to inspiring supernatural, foreign tongues, the Lord ensured that people heard and understood the teaching of the Word.

And so it is today. The Lord intends that His people hear the Word through His servants – pastors. When pastors fulfill their role of 'feeding the sheep' they are providing the congregation with 'true Manna,' that is, the very Bread of life – the Word of God.

The pressure on pastors as teachers is that there is easy access to some of the world's best teachers through radio and internet. A small town pastor with little or no seminary training or practical experience may feel intimidated by the thought of teaching his church what the Word of God says. However, it is imperative that pastors trust the Lord to equip them to teach their own congregations as He sees fit. There must be strict diligence to teaching the truth of God's Word, and not caving to the worldview of the present culture.

The voices of the world will crowd in to your church. The lies of the world will try to convince the members of your church that the Bible is outdated, irrelevant, or misunderstood. You must, as the pastor and teacher of your church, combat that message with the powerful truth of the Living Word. When you feel weak in your ability to stand firm and to speak loudly, trust the Lord to powerful speak through the truth of His Word.

In addition to the lies of the world, you may find your congregants pushing for a new message. In 2 Timothy 4: 2-4 Paul urges pastors to "preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. Instead

be true to the Word and trust in its power to convict, to transform, and to lead to Christ.” Do not be tempted to give your congregants what they think they want. Resist the temptation to share charming stories and inspiring testimonies only. Preach the Word. Allow the power of the Spirit to convict, to transform, and to lead to Christ. When ‘itchy ears’ want an easy message, remind them that what they truly need is a strong Saviour.

There may come times when your teaching is not popular, and you lose favour in the sight of man. If you are being diligent to preach the Word in Spirit and in truth, you will be pleasing your Heavenly Father, which is certainly the greater reward.

However, be excited that times will come when your teaching is received by your congregation with great faith and great joy, and, by the Holy Spirit’s work in your church, it will spark a renewal of hearts and minds, changing your church and the community around you for the sake of the Gospel!

Do not lose heart, pastor. Recognize that despite all the roles a pastor holds, it is through the teaching (whether through the pulpit or everyday example) that the people hear the Word. And it is through hearing that they receive faith (Romans 10:17).

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IN REVIEW

- Pastors must remember to not hold a false authority over their congregations by making the understanding of the Word seem like it is only for the leadership of the church.
- Pastors must not be intimidated by other trained teachers but must rely on the anointing and appointing of the Lord as they teach their congregations.
- When the world preaches a false reality, pastors must diligently hold to the truth of the Bible.
- Even if the members of the congregation seem to want to hear a softer message, the pastor must not tickle 'itchy ears,' but must teach the Word of God.

