

The Pastoral Ministry (rev 7/2021)
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Chapter 1

The Dignity of Ministry

Many have a low view of ministry, but the Scriptures tell us that lay people should revere pastors, since they are Christ's under shepherds.

The writer of the book of Hebrews says: "Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct" (Hebrews 13:7, NKJV).

Hebrews also says; "Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you. (Hebrews 13:17, NKJV)

Former godly leaders are to be imitated; present leaders are to be obeyed. As pastors, their shepherding responsibilities should command the obedience of our laypeople and appreciate the grandeur of the ministry entrusted to us.

The dignity may be depicted in five different areas: its divine origin, its glory, its greatness, its purposes, and its rewards.

1. Its Divine Origin

God the Father gave us this ministry.

King Hezekiah told the priests and Levites, "My sons, do not be negligent now, for the Lord has chosen you to stand before Him, to serve Him, and that you should minister to Him and burn incense" (2 Chronicles 29:11, NKJV).

The Lord not only chose priests and Levites in the Old Testament times, but He has also chosen us today for a four-fold purpose: 1) to stand in His presence (to delight in Him, to listen to His bidding); 2) to minister to Him (to make glad His heart); 3) to lead the people in worship (to acknowledge who He is and to exult in the worthiness of our great God) ; and 4) to make offerings

to Him (that is, to give of ourselves and all that He has given us).

The apostle Paul said, “Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,” (2 Corinthians 5:18 NKJV).

God the Son commissioned us for the ministry.

Jesus said to His Father about His disciples, “As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world (John 17:18, NKJV). He told them, “So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you (John 20:21 NKJV).” Christ has elevated our commission to the same one He has received from the Father.

The question is Can we fulfill this commission? Yes, we can. We are strong in the strength that God the Son provides. The apostle Paul said, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Philippians 4:13, NKJV). Archbishop Sir Marcus Loane's version of this verse says: "I am strong to do and bear all things by virtue of my union with Christ, who never ceases to make me able."

The secret lies in our union with Christ. Former Bible teacher David Gracey said about our union with Christ that it is:

- a. A union of support, the Foundation and the Building (Ephesians 2:19-22)
- b. A union of sustenance, the Vine and the Branches (John 15:5)
- c. A union of guardianship, the Shepherd and the Flock (John 10:11)
- d. A union of kindred, the Elder Brother and the Family (Romans 8:16-17)
- e. A union of love, the Husband and the Bride (Ephesians 5:32)
- f. A union of life, the Head and the Body (Ephesians 1:22-23)

God the Holy Spirit appointed us to the ministry.

Paul exhorted the Ephesians church leaders: “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church [a]of God which He purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28). The elders, the pastors, and the shepherds were to guard their testimonies because the evil one is ever ready to trip them up.

We pastors today are to provide for the spiritual welfare of our flocks. We can do only when we are

right in the sight of God and other people. Our appointment is from the Holy Spirit of God for the express purpose of shepherding the church which Christ has bought with His own blood. That was the purchase price paid to redeem us from the power of sin, self and Satan and to constitute us as the church of God.

2. Its Glory.

The glory is of Christ whom we serve.

The Christ we serve is the incarnate, crucified, resurrected, ascended, exalted, interceding, returning Savior.

Jesus is the Incarnate Savior. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. -- And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:1,14 NKJV). God was made man, without ceasing to be God. The incarnation was not a diminishing of Jesus' deity, but an acquiring of manhood.

Jesus is the crucified Savior. "And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left" (Luke 23:33 NKJV). " ... Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3 NKJV).

Jesus is the resurrected Savior. "He is not here, but is risen!" (Luke 24:6 NKJV)." He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:4 NKJV). "I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death" (Revelation 1:18 NKJV).

Jesus is the ascended Savior. "And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven (Luke 24: 50-51 NKJV). "Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight." (Acts 1:9 NKJV).

And the ascended Christ is "gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some

pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the [a]edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; (Ephesians 4:11-13 NKJV).

Jesus is the exalted Savior. Paul prayed that the Ephesian believers would understand “what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come” (Ephesians 1 :19-21 NKJV).

Jesus is the interceding Savior. His present ministry is that of intercession. "Who is He who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us" (Romans 8:34 NKJV). "Therefore He is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25 NKJV).

Jesus is the returning Savior. "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am there you may be also" (John 14:2-3 NKJV).

"Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matthew 24:30-31 NKJV).

Small wonder then that the glory of the pastoral ministry is in the glory of the Glorious One, whom we serve.

His glory is highlighted by our weakness.

“For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe” (1 Corinthians 1:21 NKJV).

“For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence (1 Corinthians 1:26-29, NKJV).

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us (2 Corinthians 4:7, NKJV). The gospel and the marvelous changes it effects are like a great treasure contained in common clay jars. We bearers of the gospel are mortal persons, like clay jars.

God told the apostle Paul, My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness(2 Corinthians 12:9).” The glory of Christ, whom we serve, is magnified through our weakness and impotency.

His glory is seen in our expendability.

Christ's glory is seen in the expendability of His followers who are willing to lay down their lives for His sake and the gospel's. Informed sources tell us that more people have died as martyrs during the twentieth century than in the previous nineteen centuries of church history. At this writing, global terrorism, targeting in particular those who name the name of Christ, is a common occurrence. The voluntary suffering and death of these believers exalts Christ's glory.

3. Its Greatness.

And this greatness is seen in:

- God's sovereign choice of us
- God's gracious need for us
- God's generous provision for us

God's sovereign choice of us.

Someone has said, "The ministry is the choicest of His choice, the elect of His election, a church picked out of His church." This is perhaps the highest tribute one can pay to the pastoral ministry. It identifies the pastor as one who has been picked out by God Himself to be His personal representative.

This sovereign choice should cause us to give a two-fold response: First, it will be one of deep, profound gratitude. That God should have by-passed a thousand others and chosen us to represent His heavenly court here in this ungodly world is a blessed honor indeed. Upon us has been conferred a dignity of no small worth.

Second, we should desire represent God in a manner worthy of His name. Unlike any earthly ambassador, we are called to represent the King of kings with our whole being. We belong to Him from the crowns of our head to the soles of our feet. We, therefore, serve Him with our body, mind and spirit. Our daily living should back up what we say. Then we will follow in the footsteps of our Lord of whom it is said: "And the Lord visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken" (Genesis 21:1 NKJV). Our words and deeds agreeing will be a double confirmation that our credentials are from the court of heaven.

God's gracious need for us.

We not only work for God, but with God. In fact, we are those with whom God works. Paul had this in mind when he refers to us as "fellow-workers" with God. We are joint-promoters and laborers together with God. We need to remember that our ministry is a collective involvement especially when some leaders engage in solo performances. Jealousy, backbiting, fighting and quarrelling often occur even among ministers

In contrast, Paul wrote to an early church, "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase" (1 Corinthians 3:5-7).

Those who plant and water cannot impart life, but they nurture life. The greatness of the pastoral ministry is that the God, the life-giver, seeks our services as the life nourishers. He can easily dispense with our services. He can feed and fatten the souls of our people directly through the ministrations of the Holy Spirit. But He has deliberately made Himself dependent on us. The ascended Christ has given us pastors as gifts “for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12).

God also needs us pastors as kings and priests. Revelation 1: 5b-6 (NKJV) says: "To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father."

As kings, we have the honor of going to our people on God's behalf. To speak for Him is a task that not even angels can perform. Experience is a pre-requisite to communication. Only those who have experienced the saving power of Christ can communicate what it means to possess it. As a poet said, "Never did angels taste above, redeeming grace and dying love."

As priests, we can partner with the praying Christ. We can take to God the concerns and burdens of our people in the name of the interceding Christ.

God's Generous Provision for Us

God has adequately equipped us to serve Him. His generous provision includes Christ as our Leader, The Holy Spirit as our Enabler, the Word of God as our instructor and the blood of Christ as our purifier.

Christ is our Leader. He leads in our warfare against the evil one and his demonic forces. He is the Captain of our salvation, the risen Lord who defeated the prince of this world on the Calvary's Cross. Having disarmed the principalities and powers ranged against us by openly triumphing over them in the cross, He became head over every power and authority. He is there already in every situation we find ourselves.

The Holy Spirit as our Enabler. Before His ascension, Jesus told His Disciples " But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in

Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). The Holy Spirit gives us power, ability, efficiency and might.

“Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,” says the Lord of hosts. (Zechariah 4:6). The Holy Spirit is well able to equip us with spiritual power even as He did for Stephen, Paul, and the apostles of old.

The Word of God is our Instructor. What are our personal needs and those of our church members? Do we need a fresh revelation of Jesus in times of doubt and dismay, spiritual refreshment in times of dryness and barrenness, spiritual strength for our powerlessness, comfort in times of sorrow, or guidance for our perplexities? For all these and much more, the written Word of God is there to instruct us and enlighten us. Can we possibly conceive of our ministry without the Bible in our hand or its precious promises hidden in our heart?

The blood of Christ as our purifier. “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” (1 John 1:7). Praise God that His cleansing is an ongoing operation! We serve a God in a fallen world and are prone to sin’s contamination. But Jesus’ blood keeps cleansing us moment by moment; if we continually look to Him. Such cleansing is available if we keep short accounts with God and with others through repentance and confession of our sins. Then we can look straight into the eyes of all with no accusing finger troubling our conscience.

God's choice of us, His need for us, and His provision for us are three companions that can make our ministries worthwhile. Our salaries may be small but then our jobs are great. One’s employer determines the smallness or greatness of a job. Pastors serve no earthly employer, but we serve Jesus Christ, “who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see to whom be honor and everlasting power” (1 Timothy 6:15-16).

4. Its Purposes

The dignity of the pastoral ministry can be seen in its purposes:

- To demonstrate how God's truth can govern our lives.
- To transmit God's truth to minds enveloped in darkness.
- To face the enemies of truth. During the early years of the church, There's nothing I cannot do to you. Now where is your carpenter? The Christian responded: "My Carpenter, sir, is busy making a coffin for your Emperor." Evil men may kill believers, they are doing them a favor by releasing their bodies to their Maker. They are learning that whenever the thumbscrew of persecution is applied on the church, she flourishes numerically.
- To “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). What are the cardinal doctrines of our precious faith we need to defend? Ron Carlson and Ed Decker in their book: *Fast Facts on False Teaching* list the following:

1. There is only one true God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10,11; 1 Corinthians 8:4).
2. God is a Spirit who fills the heavens and the earth (Jeremiah 23:24; John 4:24).
3. God is not a man (Numbers 23:19; Job 9:32; Hosea 11:9).
4. Jesus is Almighty God manifest in the flesh (John 1: 1-3, 14, 18; Colossians 1:15-17; 1 Timothy 3:16)
5. Jesus pre-existed in heaven; humans do not (John 8:23; 1 Corinthians 15:46-49; Genesis 2:7; Zechariah 12:1).
6. We become children of God by adoption (Romans 8:14-16; Galatians 4:5,6; Ephesians 1 :5).
7. The gospel (good news) by which we are saved is that Jesus provided forgiveness of sins, resurrection, and eternal life through His finished work (1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Hebrews 1:3; John 19:30; Colossians 1:20-22).
8. We are saved by grace through faith unto good works as God's workmanship (Ephesians 2:8-10).
9. God as the Author and Finisher of our faith, makes us new creatures (2 Corinthians 5:17:17-21; Hebrews 12:2).

- To rule well in the house of God
- To comfort all who mourn

- To edify the saints
- To guide the perplexed
- To be patient with those who are willfully contrary
- To win and nurse souls
- To present every man perfect in Christ (Colossians 1 :28)
- To establish points of contact with the unconverted
- To comfort the disturbed
- To disturb the comforted (the spiritually indifferent people)
- To hasten the return of our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 15:4). This will happen when the body of Christ on earth is completed

5. Its Rewards

The rewards of joy in our lifetimes

God pours love into our hearts for those whom He has reached through us. The apostle Paul wrote to some of His converts, "Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved" (Philippians 4:1). To other he wrote, "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For you are our glory and joy." (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20).

Joy floods our hearts when we see souls renouncing sin and selfishness, turning to the Lord, and being established in Him.

Someone asked a converted Hindu woman what changes Christ had brought to her:

She smiled and said, "I sweep the floor of my house cleaner. I cook my husband's food better. I talk to him mildly when he gets angry. I show him that Christ has made me a better wife".

The reward of joy in the hereafter

"Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many

to righteousness like the stars forever and ever" (Daniel 12:3).

" ... when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away" (1 Peter 5:4).

"There is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing" (2 Timothy 4:8).

" Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love" (James 1:12).

Small wonder, then, that saints of former generations had this to say about the grandeur and dignity of the pastoral ministry:

"With all my discouragements and sinful despondency; in my better moments I can think of no work worth doing compared to this: Had I a thousand lives, I would willingly spend them in it; and had I as many sons, I should gladly devote them to it" (Mr. Scott).

"You are entering upon a work, that will keep you continually in the way of this incomparable satisfaction; and I hope that the saving or enlightening and edifying, of one soul, at anytime, will be a matter of more joy to you, than if all the wealth of Ophir should flow in upon you" (Cotton Mather).

"I take you all to record that a life spent in the service of Christ is the happiest life that a man can spend upon earth" (Philip Henry).

Here's an epitaph that was raised by native converts to Dr. John Geddie in Aneityum, New Hebrides: "When he landed here in 1848, there were no Christians; When he left here in 1872, there were no heathen. "

Chapter 2

The Demands of Ministry

Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone serves Me, let Him follow Me ... If anyone serves Me, him will My Father honor" (John 12:26).

If those who serve Christ have to follow Him, then we pastors should follow Him even more closely. Our academic or theological knowledge will not draw people to Christ but only our likeness to Him will do so. Pastor Robert Murray McCheyne said, "It is not great talents God blesses so much as likeness to Jesus. A holy minister is an awful (full of awe) weapon in the hand of God."

Jesus wants us to follow Him so closely that even His slightest whisper becomes a supreme command

.

What does following Christ involve?

1. A Willingness to Cleave to Christ at All Times

David said, "I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. (Psalm 34:1)

When Job was going through great trials, he was not bitter but said about God, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." (Job 13:15)

Before Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were cast into the fiery furnace said to King Nebuchadnezzar: "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up." (Daniel 3:17-18).

When they came through the fire without even their hair singed or their clothes smelling like

smoke, Nebuchadnezzar's exclaimed, " "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God!" (Daniel 3:28)

When Alan Cameron, the Scottish Covenanter, was unjustly held in prison, soldiers entered his cell seeking to shake his resolution and piety by showing him the head of his son Richard whom they killed.

The old man staggered, as if struck in the face by whip. But then he lifted up his head and said: "It is the will of the LORD; Good is the will of the LORD" . He was able to see the God's hand in the depths of his sorrow and distress.

Before my friend's wife went in for cancer surgery, he turned to Job 1:21 and read, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

2. A Willingness to Waste Ourselves on Christ

When Jesus ate dinner at the home of Simon the leper in Bethany, Mary broke a flask of expensive oil of spikenard and poured it on Jesus' head. "But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, 'Why was this fragrant oil wasted? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.' And they criticized her sharply. But Jesus said, 'Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me'...'She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial.'"

(Mark 14:4-6,8).

Let's assume that two men Mr. A and Mr. B, work in an office. Both feels called of God to full-time ministry. Mr. A responds to the call, goes to a distant land, and serves God there. Years pass by but no one is converted through his labors. Mr. B continues to work in the same office, witnesses to those he meets, and has the joy of seeing some turn to Christ. Was Mr. A's work in vain? Did he waste his life? No, he did his part and later on will reap the fruit of his

labors.

Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines; though the labor of the olive may fail, and the fields yield no food; though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls—Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. (Habakkuk 3:17-18).

Someone has rendered a free paraphrase of these verses. "Though my business schemes fail, profits turn to losses, I lose my job, my bank balance dwindles to nothing and I cannot see where I'm going to get another job or support my family, yet I'll rejoice in the Lord."

Though everything is taken away from us, God's love to us can never fail. When the worst has happened, the best is yet to be. Paul said, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?... yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." (Romans 8:35,37).

We should always be on the top of our circumstances; otherwise, our circumstances can become our masters. Paul and Silas were thrown in jail, but at midnight they "were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed"(Acts 16:25-26).The jailer and his family came to the Lord.

While a university student, Henry Martyn won honors in mathematics and the classics and was set for a brilliant academic career. Instead, he became ordained in an unpopular evangelical church. His friends and family considered this foolish and were further outraged when he decided to become a missionary to India. When he became sick and died at the age of 31, many people in England felt he had wasted his life. But during that period of seven years overseas, he translated the New Testament in three languages -- Hindi, Arabic and Persian. Martyn's life shows that it is not how long we live but how full we live that counts in the kingdom of God.

3. A Willingness to Serve Others

When His disciples were arguing over who would be the greatest, Jesus told them, "He who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves" (Luke 22:26).

At the last supper, Jesus explained to His disciples, "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that you also should do as I have done to you" (John 13:14-15).

Paul said, "For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake" (2 Corinthians 4:5).

A Puritan once prayed: "Lord, open Thou mine eyes that I might see the real smallness of my greatest greatness. "

When we see our "greatest greatness," we should ask the Lord to reveal the real smallness of our supposed greatness. The parable of the Unprofitable Servant teaches us: "So likewise, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, "We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do" (Luke 17:10).

4. A Willingness to Be Made of No Reputation.

Christ practiced selfless humility. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:5-8)

A German baron was once traveling up a snowy mountain road when his wagon axle broke, and he was seriously injured. Being snowbound, He resigned himself to dying there. But God had mercy on him and sent a poor laborer up that mountain road. He found the injured man, carried his body to the foot of the mountain and committed him to the care of kind people.

Before the laborer walked away, the German baron asked for his name, but poor man would not tell him. The baron was insistent, but the laborer said that since we do not know the name of the Good

Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37), he did not need to tell his name. Instead of availing himself of an opportunity to be cared for by the baron for the rest of his life, he reflected the mind of Christ in making himself nothing.

The valet of the last German Kaiser wrote a biography of his master. In his book, he said, "My master was a vain man; he always wanted to be in the limelight. When he went to a christening ceremony, he wanted to be as the baby; when he went to a wedding, he wanted to be as the bride; when he went to a funeral, he wanted to be as the corpse." His consuming desire was that the eyes of the people should be constantly trained on him.

In contrast, someone asked C.T. Studd what would become of Worldwide Evangelistic Crusade, which he had founded, when he died.

Studd replied: "When I die, there will be one fool less; therefore, my God can do His work much better."

5. A Willingness to Surrender Our Legitimate Rights

The apostle Paul talks about Christian rights 1 Corinthians 9, verses 1 – 14, but in verses 15 -23, he impresses upon us the need for surrendering such legitimate rights, even marriage. He says, "Do we have no right to take along [a] believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas [Peter]?" (1 Corinthians 9:5). Then he adds, "But I have used none of these things" (v. 15); "Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you" (v. 23).

6. A Willingness to Return Good for Evil.

As pastors, we need to be ready to not only lay down our lives for our friends, but also for those who hate us. "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends," (John 15:13). That was Christ's teaching, but in actual practice He laid down his life for everyone, even his enemies. "For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His

life.” (Romans 5:10).

Jesus' practice exceeded His teaching, unlike most of us in the ministry. The act of returning good for evil is beautifully illustrated in the lives of both Jesus and Stephen, the first martyr. On the cross, Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do” (Luke 23:34). When Stephen’s enemies threw stones at him, “Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not charge them with this sin.’ And when he had said this, he fell asleep” (Acts 7:60).

Dr. Paul Rees once said:

“To return evil for good is Satan-like,
To return evil for evil is beast-like,
To return good for good is man-like,
To return good for evil is Christ-like.”

7. A Willingness to Die Daily unto Ourselves

“Always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you” (2 Corinthians 4:10-12).

"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain." (John 12:24). Theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, “When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die.”

Jesus said, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23).

"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." (Luke 14:26).

Paul said, "I die daily" (1 Corinthians 15:31).

8. A Willingness to Make a Clean Break with Sin

"Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king's house. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to behold. So David sent and inquired about the woman. And someone said, "Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" Then David sent messengers, and took her; and she came to him, and he lay with her, for she was cleansed from her impurity; and she returned to her house." (2 Samuel 11:2-4). Later, David confessed to Nathan the prophet, "I have sinned against the Lord" (12:13). Psalm 51 is David's prayer of repentance when he cried to the Lord, "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin" (51:2).

"Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes (Isaiah 1:16).

"Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, 'See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you'" (John 5:14).

"Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame (1 Corinthians 15:34).

"Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

" Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure." (1 Timothy 5:22).

See, desire, take are the three operative principles of sin.

9. A Willingness to Obey the Dictates of the Holy Spirit.

"He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you" (John 16:14).

The Holy Spirit's task is to glorify Christ in us and through us. He does this by reproducing in us the mind and the character of Christ.

In Jesus prayer for His disciples, He said, "I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me...And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (John 17:23,26).

Christ's supreme desire is that He might be reincarnated in our lives. His desire is consummated as we bear the fruit of the Spirit, namely," love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23)

The Holy Spirit is molding us into Christ's likeness through every trial permitted in our lives. Like in mirrors, we begin reflecting His glory and grace. "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

10. A Willingness to Create Time for Prayer.

We will never have time for prayer; we have to create time. When we do not pray, we insult God implying that we can get along without prayer. Also, we sin against God when we do not pray for others. We have to reach the level where we delight in His presence and commune with Him as with a friend.

Bernard of Clairvaux said, "Intercessory praying is the business of business." Jesus told His disciples that they "always ought pray and not lose heart" (Luke 18:1). Paul told his converts to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Author Wesley Duewel wrote, "Not every Christian is called to go; not every Christian is able to make a substantial financial contribution to the work of Christ's Kingdom; but there is no limit to what any Christian may accomplish through prayer"

There is nothing that the devil dreads as much as prayer, so his great concern is to keep us from praying. Someone said, "Satan laughs at our toiling, mocks at our wisdom but trembles when we pray." Evangelist D. L. Moody agreed when he said, "Christ's soldiers fight best on their knees."

Let us rejoice that every time we pray, we enter into partnership with the praying Christ.

11. A Willingness to Study Diligently.

Paul told Timothy, his young coworker, "be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

"I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding." (Jeremiah 3:15).

"I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking," (Jeremiah 23:4).

"I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them—My servant David. He shall feed them and be their shepherd" (Ezekiel 34:23).

Jesus told Peter, "Feed my lambs ... Tend My sheep ... Feed My sheep" (John 21:15-17).

"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"(1 Peter 5:2-3).

We need to study God's Word diligently so that we can feed, care for, and shepherd His flock effectively. If we do not do so, then we should not be surprised if our sheep seek pasture elsewhere.

12. A Willingness to Suffer for Christ's Sake

"I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored! To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now" (1 Corinthians 4:9-13).

"To you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake," (Philippians 1:29).

"Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter (1 Peter 4: 12-16).

At this writing, pastors, Christian men and women are suffering intense persecution at the hands of Hindus, Muslims and Buddhists, even to the point of death.

The Lord Jesus Himself has said:

"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

*"No wounds? No scar? Can he have followed far
Who hath no wounds, no scar?" --Amy Carmichael*

What can people do against us? At the most, they can kill us. But then they do us a favor. by releasing our spirits to our Father in heaven.

During persecution, fence-sitters will not identify themselves as followers of Christ. The church not only gets purified but also grows numerically.

Chapter 3

The Dangers of the Ministry

We pastors should guard ourselves from. three types of dangers: basic dangers, general dangers, and specific dangers.

1. Basic Dangers

Guard against entering the ministry without being converted.

Peter warned leaders, “Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble (2 Peter 1:10).

Guard against counterfeit experiences. Make sure you bear the evidence of your new birth. A pastor I know spent over fifty years in the ministry but was not really born again. With tears flowing down his face, he gave his heart to the Lord in a pastors' conference.

Archbishop Sir Marcus Loane, whom I had escorted to a number of pastors' conferences, always began these meetings with a message on the new birth. When I asked him why he did so, he said, “We should never take for granted that those in the ministry are truly converted.”

Sometimes God may bless the sermons an unconverted man preaches because He owns His truth, although He disowns the man. But this not the normal pattern. We can give only what we have experienced ourselves.

Guard against entering the ministry without a definite call.

"I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran. I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied" (Jeremiah 23 :21).

"Take heed to the ministry, which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it"

(Colossians 4:17).

God has ordained us to our work, and we must not fail him. We are the standard bearers in the Lord's army. Therefore, we pastors are marked men and are high on Satan's hit list. If he can get at us, then he can get at our people, God's flock. Satan cannot be outwitted by our own strength or wisdom. He is a spiritual force. Only God the Holy Spirit can resist him. We pastors have to avoid many pitfalls, so we need to be aware of the dangers facing us.

What were our motives for entering the ministry? Did we want to gain glory for God or gain financial or material benefits? Peter wrote to leaders, "shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly" (1 Peter 5:2).

Guard against independency of the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual truths delivered independently of the Holy Spirit's anointing only hardens listeners' hearts. This could well be a major reason to why our churches are filled with nominal Christians. We need to be Spirit-filled, if we want to bear fruit, more fruit and much fruit (see John 15:1,5). "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth"(Acts 1:8).

Guard against not being in God's will.

Get to know God's will for you. When you attended a Bible school or a theological seminary, did you ask God to reveal to you what He wants you to do when you graduated? If He wants you to be a pastor, He will shut every other door. He will not keep you in needless suspense. Remember, God is too good to delight in anyone's misery, and His clock is neither too fast nor too slow.

2. General Dangers

Assuming that we are genuinely converted persons with a definite call to serve Christ as pastors, we should guard against the general dangers of robbing God's glory, spiritual pride, employing

carnal wisdom in spiritual matters, ministerialism, and inconsistent living.

Robbing God's glory

Someone once said, "Even when Christ is the text of our sermons, self may be the spirit and substance of them as if we were lifting up the Cross of Christ, to hang our own glory on it."

No one can ever boast in the presence of God. As the Scriptures say, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 1:31).

Spiritual pride.

Spiritual pride is a sign of immaturity. This evidences itself when we think highly of ourselves and maintain attitudes of spiritual superiority.

When the Corinthians questioned Paul's apostolic authority, he said,

"For I consider that I am not at all inferior to the most eminent apostles" (2 Corinthians 11:5).

This was a true, for what he had done in God's name could not be equaled. Some years passed. Then Paul said: "To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given" (Ephesians 3:8). Note the descent of the apostle from "the most eminent apostles" to being "less than the least of all saints".

More years passed. Soon Paul was going to end his pilgrimage. Now what has he to say of himself? "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief" (1 Timothy 1:15).

Paul engaged in "progressive disglorification"—from among the chiefest apostles, to less than the least of all saints, to the chief of sinners. Growing in grace is growing smaller in our own sight. As John the Baptist said about Jesus, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). We must recognize that there is nothing good in us.

"Every virtue we possess, And every conquest won, And every thought of holiness, Are His alone." -- H. Auber

Employing carnal wisdom in spiritual matters.

We may try to solve problems through worldly measures, such as resorting to unscriptural ways of raising money or drawing crowds to our churches.

Temptations to ministerialism.

We may Read the Bible and prepare sermons to instruct others Someone has said: "No man preaches his sermon well, if he has not first preached it to his own heart."

We have no right to call our people to rise up to a spiritual level to which we ourselves have not risen.

Inconsistent living.

"Our belief and our behavior, our creed and conduct, our doctrine and our deeds should go hand in hand."

A story is told of a pastor preaching to a large crowd. In the middle of his sermon, his wife walked up the church aisle. She had a box on her head, out of which clothes were falling out. "Husband," she said, "you are ever so good when you are behind the pulpit. Here's your box of clothes. You might as well live here".

God forbid that we should build up our people with sound doctrine and then destroy them with our lives. We should never ask them to deny themselves while we are indulgent, yielding to our own desires. How unthinkable to ask others to fast when our own bellies are full. We are to emulate Christ.

"To this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you

should follow His steps" (1 Peter 2:21). "He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked" (1 John 2:6). "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him" (Colossians 2:6).

3. Specific Dangers

Love of self

- a. Engaging in many projects; accepting membership in many committees.
- b. Passion for preaching --wanting others to hear us.
- c. Plagiarism: copying the language, ideas and thoughts of another author and passing it off as one's original work. (I need to make a confession. Nothing in this booklet is my own. Wherever possible I have given due credit to the authors).
- d. A unwillingness to delegate responsibility and authority to fellow workers or an unwillingness to accept responsibility for others' mistakes.

Covetousness

"Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth... covetousness, which is idolatry" (Colossians 3:5).

Covetousness is being greedy for the good things of life. It makes us lovers of our own selves, draws us away from God's people, makes us tormentors of God's people, makes us follow Jesus for ignoble purposes, and destroys our testimonies.

Indiscipline

If we are physically undisciplined, we may oversleep, overeat, neglect physical exercise, or work so hard that we hurt our health.

If we are spiritually undisciplined, we may neglect our private quiet times, neglect family devotions, or neglect praying for others.

Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing.”

Someone else said, “The houses of ministers should schools of virtue, little emblems of a church, and patterns for all the parishioners of peace and good order, sobriety, and devotion.”

Questionable moral integrity

We need to guard against careless relationships with members of the opposite sex. Nothing can destroy a ministry faster than this problem.

Some of the “works of the flesh” that Paul warned about were “adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness” (Galatians 5:19).

Showing partiality

If we pay special attention to the rich and not giving due respect to the poor and needy, we are sinning. James made this clear when he wrote, " If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. (James 2:8-9).

Abuse of the tongue

James also spoke about the untamable tongue: “The tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the whole course of nature (existence); and it is set on fire by hell ... no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so" (James 3:5-6, 8-10).

Solomon wrote: “Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; and where there is no talebearer, strife

ceases (Proverbs 26:20). An ungodly man digs up evil, and it is on his lips like a burning fire (Proverbs 16:27).

Jesus agreed, for He said, "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment" (Matthew 12:36). "Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man." (Matthew 15:11).

Too often we are guilty of gossiping, engaging in frivolous speech and not speaking the truth in love.

V. D. Gunderson said, "We do not know when we will utter our last words on earth; therefore, let us measure our conversation carefully".

Wasting time

We should guard against wasting time. Paul said, "See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:15-16).

God wants us to make the most out of the time given to us and to use every opportunity for Him. May we "approve the things that are excellent" (Philippians 1:10) and put first things first.

Overreaction

Let us take care that we do not overreact to certain situations that God permits.

Nazi Guards had killed Victor Frankl's wife and children before his eyes then stripped him naked. Instead of reacting angrily, he said, "There's one thing that you cannot do to me and that's how I react to what you have done to me."

Alexander Whyte, the Scottish Clergyman, invited a distinguished minister to preach in his church. Some folks told him that people in the congregation had said bad things about the visiting preacher. When Whyte defended his friend, they replied that these critics said even worse things about him.

"Let them say," responded Whyte, "they would have found those traits in me."

Missionary Isobel Kuhn requested for a reference from a teacher concerning her character and abilities. When the teacher did not give her a very favorable report, Isobel was disappointed and sad.

Her friend came to her and said: "Isobel, cheer up! That the teacher doesn't even know the half of what you really are in God's sight."

Isobel got the message. We are worse than the ill that others speak of us.

Pastors, in view of all that we have shared above, let us never get discouraged that we quit the ministry. Come what may, our ruling principle should be: *no quitting*.

Let us say with Paul, "One thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:13-14).

Resource Books:

Charles Bridges. *The Christian Ministry with an Inquiry into the Causes of Its Inefficiency*. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1967.

Carlson, Ron and Ed Decker. *Fast Facts on False Teachings*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2003

Spurgeon, Charles. *Lectures to My Students*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978