***The Pastor-Teacher

RV59-02***

We're in Revelation 3:14-22, studying the last of the seven letters: the letter to Laodicea. This is the third in that segment. The letter of the Lord Jesus Christ to the congregation in Laodicea deals with the problem of a prosperous church witnessing to an intellectual and cultural community. The congregation had fallen into a spirit of compromise with the human viewpoint of the population of the city in order to be accepted by the pagans. Compromise, however, necessitated their being neutral toward Bible doctrine truths, which would offend these pagans, but which were essential to their relationship with the true God. The very thing the unsaved needed to hear, the Christians in Laodicea were soft pedaling.

The reason for this was that these truths condemned the ideas and the evil practices of the pagans, who often were very prominent people in that city. The Laodicean church was confronted with the problem of offending prominent and influential people. The Christians there mistakenly viewed themselves as being blessed by God, because there was a toleration toward them on the part of the pagans, and because they lived in a city of such material well-being that it overflowed to their blessing as well. So, they viewed the fact that, because they had money, God was blessing them. That is a very serious mistake to make.

I've heard people who, obviously, were not walking very close to the Lord, who were attributing their material well-being to the fact that they were under special, divine favor. But the devil himself is a rewarder of material well-being. Therefore, just because you are prospering does not mean that it is coming as a blessing from God. This was a serious mistake that the people in Laodicea made, as we shall see, and it was very abhorrent to God. We will come in this session to some of the strongest language you find anywhere in the Scripture. And if you stop and think about it too much, it will make you literally sick.

The smug complacency of these Laodicean Christians, and their arrogant treatment of the Word of God made them a disgusting congregation to the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other word for it: a disgusting congregation. And they were a congregation. They were believers. They were people who are going to someday be pillars in the temple of God in heaven. But at this point, in their local experience, there's only one word to describe them in the eyes of the Lord Jesus Christ: they were disgusting.

**The Lord Jesus Christ**

The Lord identifies Himself, therefore, to this Laodicean church, as we have seen, with three characteristics which they had forgotten about Him, and which led to their compromising neutrality. First, the Lord introduced Himself as the Amen, meaning the final and trustworthy source of revelation from the true God; the revelation recorded accurately in the Bible; the revelation in understandable and applicable terms; and, the revelation which is immutable and complete. He also introduced Himself under the title of *the* witness; that is, the proper bonafide legal witness for the Triune God. This relates to what He has seen and heard from God the Father. The Lord Jesus Christ is described as a faithful witness in keeping mankind informed of what it needs to know about spiritual things, and of keeping believers informed.

Jesus Christ is also described as a *true* witness, in that He declares the genuine divine viewpoint of God. There are no con games played by Him for ulterior motives. So, He has the two basic qualities of a witness. He is faithful to give you the information, whether you like it or not, and He gives you the true information, so He tells it as it is.

He also identifies himself as the Creator. That is, He is the origin (the originator) of the universe by an act of divine creation. As the Creator, Jesus Christ holds the place of preeminence in all the universe. He is the one real celebrity among us. It is very important that you learn that, and never forget it. So, no matter who it is, on this earthly scene that parades or is paraded as a celebrity, you just mark over that: "hogwash." There is only one celebrity. There's only one person the Scripture says has preeminence. That's the one who created it all. He is the one that is upheld by the living God.

The Laodicean Christians were failing to remember this. They were failing to exalt Jesus Christ to the pagan world, which was exalting instead the very material creation that this Creator God had provided for them.

Now we began then at Revelation 3:15. The Lord says, "I know your works." The word "know" looks like this in the Greek Bible: "oida." This is the word for knowledge which results from inherent understanding or intuition rather than from experience. The Bible has a word which talks about knowledge that comes from experience. God the Holy Spirit uses this word "oida" because He's referring here to the knowledge that Jesus Christ has because of His omniscience as God, and His omniscience gives him certain information about this Laodicean church. It is in the perfect tense, but it has a present meaning. So, that means that Jesus Christ constantly knows the status of the Laodicean church. They never hide anything from Him. They never con Him in any way. This verb is in the active voice, which means that Jesus Christ Himself possesses this knowledge. It's indicative. It's a statement of fact.

**Works**

By His omniscience, He knows something about their works. That's the Greek word "ergon." This is the word for one's deeds or actions. It refers here to the Laodicean church ministry. Their works are their testimony to the pagan society which is surrounding it. What Jesus Christ knows about them, as Christians, is going to bring them a scathing rebuke. Of course, he knows all about us here at Berean Memorial church in the same way. What He knows about us basically is what each one of us individually is, and thinks, and our attitudes. That's what composes Berean church. The Laodicean church had a very bad reputation in the Lord's eyes because the individual believers had a very bad mental attitude and a very bad condition of performance in His eyes, and it's going to bring a scathing rebuke.

He says, "I know something very specific from omniscience about your works, that." This is the Greek word "hoti," which introduces the evaluation of the Laodicean church from the divine viewpoint of the Lord Jesus Christ: "That you are." This is the verb for status quo: "eimi." This is the verb expressing their condition or their status. It's the real condition of the Laodicean church that the Lord Jesus is referring to here, not to the self-image that they have created for themselves. This word is again present tense, which means that this was their constant condition. This wasn't something that they had slipped into, and then they got back out of it, and slipped into again. This was a constant condition. Further, it is active voice, which means that this was the status of the congregation, which means that it was the status of the individual people in that congregation. It's indicative. It's a statement of fact.

And then He gives an opposite of what they were not. This is expressed by the words "neither" and "nor." That is this word "oute" repeated. The Greek Bible has "oute oute." This is a word that is related to the Greek negative "ou," which is the strong Greek negative. That means "absolutely no." So, this word tells us that "neither/nor" is a very strong "neither/nor." There wasn't any exception to this. It is very strong language that immediately stands out on the pages of the Greek New Testament. He introduces here, with these two words, extremes of spiritual conditions which are possible. It is *the* extreme: from one end to the other.

The first extreme was "psuchros." "Psuchos" is an adjective meaning "icy cold." On the one side, as the Lord Jesus Christ evaluated them, in the spectrum of spiritual condition, they were not icy cold. This is the word which is used to describe these unbelievers in whom the gospel arouses no heat. He uses the word "psuchros." When He says to this congregation, "You are not 'psuchros," He is saying, "You are not unbelievers. You're not icy cold, lost people who have no warmth toward the gospel, and who have no response to that word of truth." This letter is written, again I remind you, to a local congregation of believers. So, this is cold, here, in the status of being lost. It's a clearcut class of people here who reject the Bible's plan of grace salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. These people are children of the devil, and they are enemies of divine viewpoint.

But notice the other part of the comparison: "You are neither (absolutely not) icy cold. On the other hand, nor are you (absolutely not) 'zestos.'" That is an adjective, which means "boiling hot." That's the other extreme of the spiritual spectrum. This word expresses a condition opposite from that of cold. This refers to people who are believers in Jesus Christ, but who are also in the status of spirituality, and moving forward in their spiritual lives toward the condition of super grace living.

You begin as a baby in the Christian life. You begin moving forward through the intake of doctrine into your soul, and your positive response to it. You store it in your human spirit. From there, God the Holy Spirit, as you are in a status of fellowship with Him, cycles up that information to affect your mind; your emotions; and, your will, and you progress through your Christian life developing spiritual maturity. You get to a point where you're an adolescent person, and then you get to the point where you're a fully mature adult person. At that point, you have reached the mountain-top experience which the Bible describes as super-abounding grace, or super grace. And that's the goal of the Christian life – to move from zero babyhood, at the point of salvation, to super grace capacity for living.

We won't go into the details of all that is noted by super grace, but as you know, one of the qualities is that you will have a firm mastery of the details of life. You'll have a firm grip upon material things. You will be able to handle prosperity without letting it destroy you. Obviously, one of the problems these people had was that they did not have was a mastery of the details of life, as we shall see. That indicates to us that, wherever they had been in the past; wherever they were on this scale; and, maybe they had once even been up to super grace, something could happened, and they were moving back down. This is a clearcut class of born-again people moving toward super grace spiritual maturity. They are the children of God, and they are positive to divine viewpoint.

At the point of your babyhood stage in the Christian life, you can immediately be spiritual. All known sins can be confessed, and you can be in a status where God the Holy Spirit is prospering and teaching and leading you. But you cannot be a mature Christian except as you have developed maturity over a period of time. But the sad part about that is that the maturity you develop can also be reversed, and it can go in the other direction. A person who is a solid, stable Christian can suddenly become an unstable, emotional yo-yo that cannot be counted on for anything. You can go in the other direction, and it is negative attitudes toward the Word of God that create the reversal. And there is something else you should be aware of. This condition of reversion can take you down to rock bottom almost overnight.

This spiritual maturity level, wherever you are on this scale, is one thing you take out into eternity when you die, or in the rapture. It is going to make a very vital difference upon the quality of your eternity, where you are on this scale of spiritual maturity. What a tragedy for Christians who have fallen into a backslidden condition; who have fallen into spiritual reversionism; and, who have lost the advanced high ground that they have conquered, and that they have achieved. Then they suddenly turn around and realize the fools they have been playing, and they start back up, and then the Lord takes them out of this life before they've had a chance to recoup the ground they lost. So, it's a very serious thing to lose the ground you had in spiritual maturity. That is what we're looking at here in terms of these people in Laodicea.

But those who were hot (boiling hot) were the people who were living and serving under the power of God the Holy Spirit. Their zeal was there, but it was zeal which was governed by Bible doctrine information. This is the opposite of the condition that Paul described of the Jews in Romans 10:1-4, where he says, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved, for I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge; for they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves into the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness for everyone that believes. So, zeal (to be boiling hot) that God honors is a zeal that is oriented to the knowledge of the Word of God. It is oriented to Bible doctrine principles.

This is a condition of the human spirit which expresses itself in Christian service. We have this indicated in Romans 12:11, which says, "Slothful in business, and fervent in spirit;" that is, in your human spirit. Fervent: how? Boiling hot: in what way? Under the control of the Spirit of God through the guidance of the Word of God.

So, here is the picture first of all. The condition existed in Laodicea where they were neither icy cold nor boiling hot – and those are opposites. "When you're hot, you're hot; when you're not, you're not." And this is the condition that faced these people.

Now, having observed that, the Son of God gives His reaction. Now this gets a little thick: "I know your production. I know what you're doing in your local church ministry. I know that you're neither icy cold (unsaved and lost), nor are you boiling hot (fervent, super grace believers). I would." The word "I would" is "ophelon." This is an interjection in the Greek, and we could translate it as "Oh that," or "Would that." It's just God the Son crying out and expressing a preference about their spiritual status. But here the word expresses a fruitless wish – something that He does not expect to happen.

"I wish that you were," and again, we have that word for "status quo" – the verb "to be:" "eimi." This time, it's in the imperfect tense. The imperfect tense refers to a past action repeatedly performed: "I would (repeatedly your condition in the past) you had been one or the other: either cold; or, hot – your active status, one way or another." Being in one spiritual extreme or the other is preferable with Jesus Christ. In between is a serious neutral zone. And it's a zone that comes under divine condemnation, because that's where the Laodicean church was. That's why they were compromising. That's why they were practicing self-deception. The neutral zone in the middle had blurred their real position relative to God. That neutral zone in the middle is a zone that they had slipped into because of their desire to be accepted, apparently, by the community in which they lived.

**A Divine Judgment**

Revelation 3:16 expresses a divine judgment: "So." This word looks like this in Greek: "houtos." This is introducing a divine decision: "So, then." This means "because." This is again "hoti" – a conjunction introducing the reason for the divine action which is about to take place: "Because you are." This is again the status quo verb "eimi." This time it is in the present tense, indicating their constant status. It is active. This was what the congregation really was. It is indicative – a statement of fact. The thing that they were was "lukewarm." This time, it's called the "chliaros." "Chliaros" means "tepid," and the word implies "nauseating." Does everybody understand what nauseating means? That means that it makes you want to throw up.

This refers to believers who are in a status of carnality. They are out of fellowship with God. They are those who are lukewarm. They are not unbelievers on the one hand, nor are they spiritual maturity believers on the other hand. What they are, are the middle-of-the-roaders (the compromisers). Whatever these people were in the past, they are now spiritually backslidden. So, they are in the status which we describe as reversionism. Maybe they never matured. Maybe they got matured, and they have come back. But they in a lukewarm position now. That puts them in the spirit of reversionism against Bible doctrine – spiritual retrogression. They will never go back to the cold position. It never goes back to the lost position, because a person cannot be lost again once they are saved. "Lukewarm" refers to reversionism in spiritual things. These Laodicean Christians are moving away from the spiritual container that they have developed in their soul into which God has been pouring His super grace upon them in the past.

This is one of the reasons, perhaps, that the Lord uses this comparison of tepid water. If you want a drink of water on a hot day, you don't like to have water that's lukewarm to drink. Perhaps He uses this analogy because, as we told you before, Laodicea had some hot springs a short distance outside of town which had great therapeutic value. When they ran that water into town, by the time it got there, it was lukewarm, and it did not have the same effect. But one thing about it was that, when it got to town, if you drank it, it caused you to be nauseated, and you would throw up. So, you couldn't drink the water, though you could sit in it and bathe in it, and get the value of it in that way.

So, what we have here is reversionistic Christians that we're talking about in this lukewarm condition. The worst people in the world to reach are reversionistic Christians. The facets of their soul are all distorted away from God's viewpoint. They can't think like God. They can't have emotions compatible with God's integrity. They can't make decisions compatible with God's thinking and God's will. They're completely out of synchronization with God's purposes for them.

The problem is that, while that is true from God's point of view, from the reversionist's point of view, he has a very fine image of himself. Therefore, he's complacent, and he's very self-satisfied. The reason for this is because the reversionist is spiritually insane. Therefore, he has lost all capacity for judging what is true experience and what is a reversal of reality. You will discover that the reversionist is the kind of person who loves the people that he should not love, and he is antagonistic toward the people that he should hold in affection. Everything comes out just the opposite. If you want to really foul up your life, just pick somebody in marriage when you're in a status of reversionism. When you are in a status reversionism, you will always pick the person that's exactly the wrong person for you to marry, because your spiritual eyes are experiencing what a photographer's lens does. It reverses everything, and it turns it all backwards. That is the tragedy of reversionism.

These people were putting on a front that they are zealous and totally dedicated to God, and they used the proper words when they gathered in church. I can guarantee you that when these folks gathered in Laodicea, there was a lot of talk about love, and there was a lot of talk about caring, and sharing, and bearing in order to help each other, and just all the rest of the alliterations that demonstrated their spiritual development. But what they were was what 2 Timothy 3:5 says: "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."

"So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither nor." Again, He uses the definite hard negative: "Neither cold nor hot. You're not one or the other." Then Jesus says, "I'm going to do something."

**The Pastor-Teacher**

Before we look at that, I want to point out one other thing. These words: cold; hot; and, lukewarm are all adjectives in the Greek Bible, and they are all in the masculine gender. But the word for church, which we think that this is referring to, looks like this (as you know): "ekklesia," and that's feminine. But these other words have all been masculine (words ending in "os"). Now, just of whom is the Lord speaking? Who is cold? Who is not cold? Who is not hot? Who is lukewarm? There is only one word that this can refer back to, and that is to the "aggelos." Do you see the "os" ending? That is the masculine word that that's referring back to. This is rather interesting that God the Holy Spirit, in describing this, is pointing the finger right back there at the pastor-teacher, who himself is obviously guilty of this spiritual condition. He has conveyed his reversionism to his congregation.

The congregation, of course, is still guilty, as individuals, because they have been willing to go along with him in the compromise of the Word of God. So, the Lord is really speaking to them through him. But the pastor-teacher is the fly in the ointment here, obviously, in this city, and God the Holy Spirit points that up to us by using this particular masculine ending.

**A Summary of the Pastor-Teacher Gift**

So, at this point, let's stop and think about this business of the pastor-teacher – this business of a pastor-teacher functioning in the pastorate. Here is a little summary:

1. **Salvation**

Preparation for the ministry begins with a man's personal salvation – when the spiritual gift of the pastor-teacher is bestowed upon him as described in Ephesians 4:11. Some among you here now may have the gift of pastor-teacher. If you do, you received it at the point that you entered the Christian life – at the point that you were born again, and spiritual gifts of various kinds were bestowed upon you sovereignly, by the sole decision of God the Holy Spirit. Every believer here has at least one spiritual gift. Some of you have more than one. A few of you may have the pastor-teacher gift.

1. **The Gift is Necessary for the Pastorate**

No one who lacks the pastor-teacher gift should be trained for the pastorate. If you do not have the pastor-teacher gift, you should not be trained for the pastorate. There is nothing so tragic for a local church as to get somebody for their pastor who has the gift of evangelism, which is another one of the spiritual gifts that God provides for the local church. Some poor local church gets stuck with that guy who's got the gift of an evangelist, and he tries to play the role of pastor, because somebody has trained him for the role of the pastor-teacher. That church never goes anywhere because his ability is concentrated on being able to present the gospel in such a way that people can understand and respond. He has a unique ability to do that. He should be outside the local church exercising that – not within it.

**Women are Excluded**

And, of course, one of the groups of the human race that we know do not have the pastor-teacher gift, and should not be trained for it, are women. 1 Corinthians 14:34 says, "Let your women keep silence in the churches. For it is not permitted unto them to speak, but they are commanded to be under obedience as also the law says." It is very hard to be a pastor-teacher and keep silent in the church when it's having its official public meetings. That is very difficult.

I heard of a Pentecostal preacher lady one time who, when this verse was pointed out to her and asked what she thought that meant, said, "Well that meant that in a New Testament church they had the babies there in church, and the women were responsible for keeping the kids silent." That was their job, so that's what that meant: "Let the women keep silence in the church." That was rather a unique exposition of the verse. I think that, perhaps, it wasn't quite what the Spirit of God had in mind. I think it means exactly what it sounds like it means.

Furthermore, 1 Timothy 3:2 says, "A bishop (or an elder, or a pastor-teacher – this is all the same person) must be blameless, the husband of one wife. It is very difficult for a female pastor to be the husband of one wife. It's not as hard today as it used to be in the past, but it still is a problem that is not exactly compatible with the scriptural program.

So, no one who lacks this gift, and who is not a male, can be a pastor-teacher.

1. **It may not be Evident in Immature Believers**

The pastor-teacher gift is not necessarily evident in an immature believer. You don't want to pass anybody off as potentially not having the gift because, in his immature stage, that gift will not be evidenced. But as he moves along in the Christian life, the gift will begin to develop and blossom out.

1. **It is not Restricted to Certain Personality Types**

The pastor-teacher gift will be found in many different male personality types, so they cannot be spotted thereby. Don't try to have a stereotype of what a pastor should look like, because some of us will fool you. There are no personality or physical types that will identify who has the gift and who does not have the gift. You'd be surprised how many times there are people who are dumb enough to think they can spot it in that way.

1. **Spiritual Maturity**

The pastor-teacher gift becomes evident in a man as he erects a spiritual maturity structure in his soul by means of the grace system of perception, and then proceeds to minister the Word. As he himself develops spiritual maturity, through the provision that God has made of grace learning, and he begins to minister the Word, the evidences of the pastor-teacher gift will begin to show. He will get a sense of it, and other people will see that he has it. If he gets up and nobody can understand him, that's probably a signal that he doesn't have the gift. If he gets up and cannot teach, that's probably a pretty good sign that he does not have the gift. On the other hand, if he can do all the things that are necessary, it will be a sign that this gift potentially lies with him.

1. **There is no Public Surrendering to Preach**

There is no formal surrender to preach, or dedication to full-time Christian service, in order to use the pastor-teacher gift. A lot of you in this congregation are very underprivileged. You have not circled around in churches very often. You may have never been in a service where people were called to dedicate themselves to preach. Very often, in churches that look for public moves, when they can't get somebody to come down to accept salvation, then the pastor will shift gears and try to get somebody to dedicate his life to full-time Christian service, and to come forward so that the meeting isn't a complete loss – to get him to come forward to dedicate himself to the pastorate. If that doesn't work, you can always fall back, so that the meeting is not a total loss, and you can call for people to come forward, and thereby indicate that they will love their mothers more in the future. None of that is going to help you to make it in the pastorate. But there are a lot of foolish people that are drawn in by that very thing. That's just a bunch of public relations stuff of the professional preachers to con the sheep by giving them a little public action. This simply confuses the issue, and it leads some into the pastorate whose spiritual gifts lie elsewhere.

I have had young men tell me the turmoil that they were in because they had gotten up in their church, and walked forward, and dedicated themselves to go into the pastorate, and had even gone off to seminary, and then discovered that this was not for them. And I've had them say to me: "What am I going to do? I can't go home and face those people." Well, the worst thing in the world for him to do would be to go on in what (it has now become clear to him) is not God's calling, and he's going to have a whole lot worse to face if he continues. But he got himself into that pickle in the first place because some con-artist preacher was making some public action to give the folks a big thrill that they'd had a wonderful service, and God had accomplished a lot among them by getting some poor character to get all emotionally excited and make a public declaration that he was henceforth going to go into the pastorate. The pastor-teacher gift is totally the product of the grace of God.

In 1 Timothy 1:12, Paul says, "And I thank Christ Jesus, our Lord, who has enabled me in that he counted me faithful, putting me in the ministry, who was before a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious, but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 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. Nevertheless, for this cause, I have obtained mercy, that in me first, Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on Him to everlasting life." Paul says, "I'm in the ministry purely as a product of the grace of God.

1 Corinthians 15:10 reinforces that same thought. Paul says, "But by the grace of God, I am what I am. And His grace, which was bestowed upon me, was not in vain, but I labored more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." Paul's labors as a missionary, and on occasion, as a pastor, was the grace of God laboring in him.

Ephesians 3:7 says, "Of which I was made a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power." So, you don't walk forward in an aisle and enter the pastorate that way. That is the kiss of death. You enter the pastorate as a pure grace gift of God to certain males.

1. **It is not a "Special" Call**

The use of the pastor-teacher gift is not via some special call any more than that of any other spiritual gift. Any testimonies that anybody gives of having a special call to preach is mostly imagination and emotion. It's not the Holy Spirit. That is not the way the Holy Spirit works. He does not give you a special call in the middle of the night. It is the leading step-by-step, moment-by-moment, as he opens the doors, and eventually, you are aware of the fact of what He has for you and where He is leading you. Most of us in our seminary days, if we were pressed to say why we were in that school, preparing in biblical studies, could only say, "Because the Lord has led me here." We had very little idea that we were going into the pastorate or that we were going into anything else. That is the way the Lord works. He does not give a special call. It's a moment-by-moment development.

1. **Authority**

A man with the pastor-teacher gift must learn to function under authority in order to exercise the authority himself with grace and without abuse. One of the problems in exercising the pastor-teacher gift (of being in the pastorate) is the willingness to exercise authority. In 1 Thessalonians 5:12, we read, "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you" – to recognize these people.

Then Hebrews 13:7 speaks to the authority that must be exercised by a pastor: "Remember them who have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God, whose faith you follow, considering the end of their manner of life."

Hebrews 13:17: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls as they must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you." A pastor-teacher has to be capable of exercising authority within the local congregation. Perhaps that's one reason why those who come to the pastorate with military backgrounds have a little edge on other people, in that respect, because they have had to learn how to take orders, and they have learned, in time, how to be able to give them as well, and consequently, to lead. If there's anything that the apostle Paul was fond of comparing the Christian life and the Christian ministry to, it was to military service. We are engaged in an angelic warfare.

1. **Responsibilities**

The man with the pastor-teacher gift must be faithful in small responsibilities before he can be entrusted with the spiritual well-being of a congregation. This is the willingness to play the small role, and the willingness to take the unimportant and the non-glamorous role. That's a mark of someone who is developing into a capable pastor-teacher.

1. **Promotion**

Promotion from little responsibilities to greater responsibilities is up to the Lord. Whatever the nature or the size of the promotion, it's up to the Lord. It's not done by making contacts and conniving. There are many pastors who fulfill greater personal ambitions, and who walk to greater salaries on the backs of a series of congregations as they have connived and maneuvered themselves into positions of advancement. If the Lord does not promote you, you haven't been promoted, no matter what you may think has happened to you. That is important to remember for all of us, as well as the pastor-teacher group. Whatever the nature of the size of it, the promotion has to come from the Lord.

1. **The Size of the Congregation Doesn't Matter**

Whatever the size of the pastor-teacher congregation or its location, its basic need is the same. It has been spelled out for us in 1 Peter 5:2-3. Here is the greatest tragedy of the pastorate today. Peter, speaking to the other pastor-teachers says, "Feed the flock of God, which is among you, taking the oversight of it, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre (for money's sake), but of a ready mind. Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock." That is what the people need: instruction in God's word. It doesn't matter whether it's a big congregation or a small one: that is the name of the game.

1. **Praise for the Pastor-Teacher Doesn't Matter**

The pastor-teacher is not to pay attention to the praise of his church members. That probably was part of the problem in Laodicea. When you start believing all the praise that church members will give you, you want to start wearing a clerical collar so that you can identify yourself as one worthy of such praise. Don't go around hanging a clergy sign on the bumper of your car. A lot of preachers like to do that to identify who they are. Don't start calling yourself reverend. A lot of preachers feel that they have a certain status by being called reverend. Just forget about all this building up of your professional reputation by your calculated moves.

The same congregational member who will be so pleased with you one time will, at the next sermon, find you an irritating meddler in his life, and it would be well for you to remember that. So, don't get conned because people go out the door and say, "Very nice sermon, Your Excellency." They do that here all the time. Therefore, one has to be prepared for interpreting that in the light of its short-lived glory.

You remember how the Roman emperors did it with their conquering generals when they came leading their captives. As they rode through the streets of Rome in their chariot, receiving the adulation of the crowd and the multitude, there was always a slave behind the conquering general who kept whispering in his ear: "All glory is passing. All glory is passing." This was just so the general could know that that moment of high exhilaration of the conqueror was going to lie in dust very quickly by a reversal of his fortunes.

1. **Trust in the Lord Alone**

The pastor-teacher must always remember that some of his sheep are really wolves in sheep's clothing. Therefore, he must trust himself to the Lord, and to the Lord alone. Some of the sheep are simply wolves who are wearing sheep's clothing. In Acts 20:29, the last thing that the apostle Paul had to say to that group of faster teachers from Ephesus that met with him on the beach, before he shoved off for Jerusalem, was to make this point very strongly to them. Paul said, "For I know this: that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own self shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. Therefore, watch and remember that for the space of three years, I ceased not to warn everybody day and night with tears," and so on. Paul says, "After my departure, be prepared for wolves to come in." What he was saying to them was, "I'm not going to be there to knock their heads. It's going to be up to you now to spot these wolves who are maneuvering into positions within the congregation. The more informed your congregation is in doctrinal principles, the less opportunity the wolves have of moving in and deceiving the sheep. It is the congregation who has been left in ignorance; that is, a sitting duck for these wolves in sheep's clothing.

1. **Study and Teach the Word**

The pastor-teacher's main job from God is to study and teach the Word. In Acts 6:4, after the deacon office was established, and these men were appointed, the spiritual leaders said to them, "We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word." That is the name of the game. You have no other basic demands to make of your pastor except this: that he study the Word of God; that he get up and know what he's talking about from the language of Scripture; and, that he explain it in a way that is intelligible and understandable, and from which God the Holy Spirit can make it applicable in your life. With that, you've got something with which to go forward with, both now and in eternity. Without that, you've got exactly nothing.

**Counseling**

That is why it is a tragedy when the pastorate becomes primarily a counseling instrument. Every time a church has a local meeting, and that pastor-teacher is up there speaking, that is counseling people. And this should have been true in Laodicea, and it should have been true everywhere through the ages. If people know the Word of God, they know how to meet their problems. If they are ignorant of the principles of the Word of God, they don't know how to meet their problems.

If you have been informed and then you have violated what you have been taught, then you don't need a counselor. You need to go to somebody and say, "Listen, now, you talked about marriage. You said the Bible says, 'Don't marry an unsaved man,' but this guy was so nice. I just felt called to dating evangelism, and he promised to become a Christian. So, I married him, but now, the dirty so-and-so won't come to church, and he is a slob." Well, you knew the Scriptures. You knew the principle. You violated it. What counseling do you need? Now you're going to have to look to the grace of God and to the intake of the Word into your soul in order to live under the problem you created for yourself. That is counseling. That's the only kind of counseling that'll carry you through. All this other emotional guff and substitution will destroy you. But information from the mind of God will preserve you.

Counseling is becoming very dangerous. I just read the other day about one of the very famous churches out on the West Coast pastored by John MacArthur, who many of you know. It was a very excellent expositor of Scripture in the tradition of the expositors of the Word. He and his staff are having a legal suit brought against them because they counseled a young man who had some problems, and they directed him to the Word of God, and they directed him to some biblical principles. The church has a tape ministry, and they directed him to certain tapes that he should listen to and study that would explain certain biblical concepts. So, he did that instead of going to a psychiatrist. So in time, he killed himself. Now, I think his parents are suing MacArthur and his staff and the church because they counseled him toward the Word of God instead of sending him to a psychiatrist. Had he gone to psychiatrists, he probably would have killed himself sooner, so they probably were ahead of the game at best. But this is the ridiculousness to which the world is coming.

There are insurance companies that now sell malpractice insurance for preachers. And I can guarantee you a lot of them need it, apart from anything else. But can you believe people are going out and buying malpractice insurance for preachers?

Well, the pastor-teacher, if he's doing what he's supposed to be doing, is studying the Word, and he is explaining it to the people of God. He's not called to be providing social services; to provide entertainment; and, to fill a lot of the traditional views that are imposed upon pastors. And you have to fight this.

**Dr. Danish's Testimony on the Pastorate**

It was 30 years ago last May that I walked on the hallowed grounds of what is now Berean Memorial Church, fresh out of Dallas Seminary. And I did everything they taught me there. The first thing they taught me was to develop my knuckles. I needed a lot of calluses because I'd need them for pounding on doors. So I did. For months, I went pounding on doors to try to interest people in the Word of God. It took a lot of time. It took a lot of exhaustion. I remember one man coming to church who was very interested in our work. One time he said to me, "You know, what I really like about attending church at Berean is that the sermons are just 20 minutes long." I got to thinking about this. I got to thinking: "30 years down the line, what will we look back upon, in influence upon human lives, if I keep walking around this little town knocking on doors, trying to bestir people, who don't give a flip, to come to church and to be all the things they should be?

There was a core of people who were already here. They were a small group, but they were a hard-core group. They were ready to go, and they have been the basis of what is here today in its fantastic outreach that is beyond anything any of us ever dreamed that awes us through the tape ministry alone. I decided, "I'm through knocking on doors. I'm through walking around; visiting in people's homes; smiling at them; eating their donuts; and, drinking their tea. I'm going to occupy myself with what the Word of God has called me to do: to learn something about the Bible," because I didn't know all that much. I don't know too much now, but what I know is the only thing that I can pass along, and that is my calling.

It was kind of odd because my doctrinal dissertation at Dallas Seminary was on the ministry of the local church. I had written in that dissertation that the problem with the local church today is that the pastors view themselves as performers in the pulpit, with the people out there as the cheerleaders cheering them on to save souls, and to win people to the Lord, and to get out there in the community, and to make a name, and to suffer for Jesus. And I knew better. I had even written it, and I didn't follow my own advice.

So, I switched gears and said, "No more. The thing that is important is the Word of God." Then I found that the sermons weren't 20 minutes long anymore. They just went on and on and on, because suddenly I had a lot more to say, and it was a whole lot more significant. I noticed that there some sermons here that are on tapes that we used to make. They're older tapes. Mr. Rouch used to bring a tape recorder and stick it here, and then he would put a little dangling microphone, and he would record those sermons. I noticed that when we open up one of the cabinets, in one of the bins that we took out, these sermons were all sitting there. I've got to get hold of those and get rid of those before somebody gets hold of those things, because it's pathetic stuff. And yet, coming out of seminary, somebody just points you in the right direction, because here is what the Word of God has for you as a pastor-teacher. You won't be leading people down the rosy blind path that Laodicea did. I know that's true. Many pastors have written us about the pastor-teacher series in the basic tapes, and this has changed their lives because they finally realize what being in the pastorate was all about – what it is that God had called them to do. Then they came alive. His job is to teach.

1. **A Strong Spiritual Maturity Structure**

The pastor-teacher must have a strong spiritual maturity structure to survive in the pastorate. He faces a lot of psychological pressures from people who are trying to manipulate him, and often trying to use him against other believers. He is prone to a great deal of physical drain, which, if permitted, will weaken his own creativity and his own spiritual discernment. This comes about often when he is forced to carry too many jobs in the local operation. He has to be able to survive the problem of trying to run a quality ministry on limited funds, which consumes his time, because he has to turn his attention to raise the money, because the people of God are not responding as the Word of God says they should when they had benefited from the instruction of the Word. The only way to survive in the pastorate, in short, is to have a constant orientation to who and what God is. He is never to forget the essence of God, and never to have any illusions about himself.

1. **A Right Pastor-Teacher for a Right Church**

There is a right pastor-teacher for a right church. God has to join them up, and then it's a winning combination. I don't know if that's what happened in Laodicea – whether the wrong pastor got into the wrong church. But one thing is evident from these masculine endings: that this man was held responsible by God the Holy Spirit for having failed to lead this church in the direction in which it should be going. He himself was a reversionist, and they picked up his signals.

Next time, we're going to come to that sobering picture in Scripture: one of the most startling pictures that we have associated with the living God. It is a very clear expression of what God thinks of reversionism. If you don't know what reversionism is, you'll learn it next time in detail.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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