

Text: 1 Pt 5.2-3

We've been working our way around the topic of church leadership the last few weeks.

- First message: a general overview of the passage with an emphasis on staying faithful during troubling times (the general theme of 1 Peter)
- Second message: discussing what the people of the 1st century would understand when Peter used the term elders
- Third message: Part 2 on elders, but more with a focus on their function

Today we will get to a more detailed look at shepherding, or pastoring. I surveyed vss. 2-3 in the first message, but I want to get more detailed and focus on the nature of pastoral ministry.

Read 1 Pt 5.1-4, text 2-3

This message might be more than one part also!

To start with, though, notice the word “shepherd” in verse 2.

- Imperative tense, a command
- Views the action as a whole, the totality of shepherding
- A frequent metaphor for leadership, esp. in OT of kings/civil rulers
- The object of shepherding is “the flock” – a diminutive form, denoting affection, “the beloved flock”
- The flock belongs to God, not the shepherd

Now notice “exercising oversight” (“bishops”) ... (verb form of *episcopos*, bishop)

- The work of the shepherd is “exercising oversight”
- We think of “oversight” or “overseer” in the sense of a “foreman” or “boss.” This isn't the NT view, rather the pastor is one who “watches over souls”

Heb 13.17 ¶ Obey your leaders and submit *to them*, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

So the “overseer” is a watcher for the health of your souls, this is the consistent NT viewpoint, whatever errors pastors may have made in their own self-conception.

- We tend to think of “bishop” as a more exalted position than “pastor,” but here, the elder is to pastor by ‘bishopsing’ (not a real word!).

The act of oversight is qualified by three contrasts:

“Three contrasts follow that clarify the proper motivation and manner of an elder’s ministry.”¹

Proposition: The work of the shepherd demands a transformed temperament in the pastor first, so it can translate to the people second.

I. Modeled after God

A. The negative: not ‘under compulsion’

1. Adverb only used here in NT, rare outside of NT
2. The idea seems to be “in a close grip that compels”
3. Verb form used in Ac 26.11 when Paul tried to “compel” Christians to blaspheme
4. So here, it seems to suggest a grudging, unwilling service

“The elder should not occupy the office as a reluctant draftee, doing an irksome task because he feels that he cannot escape it.”²

B. The contrast: voluntarily, according to the will of God

1. Voluntarily has the sense of actively deciding in favor of something
 - a. Heb 10.26 starts with “if we go on sinning **willfully**”
 - b. So, the idea of “deliberately” here
2. But Peter adds “according to *the will of God*” to expand the idea
 - a. Notice “*the will of*” is in italics, so supplied by trans.
 - b. Could easily be simply “according to God” — or, “in the same way God does”

¹ Tom Constable, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), 1 Pt 5.2.

² D. Edmond Hiebert, *1 Peter* (Winona Lake, Ind.: BMH Books, 1997), 303–4.

Jn 4.34 Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.

When we take Jesus as our model, it means being willing to sacrifice self, give up worldly ambitions, and serve willingly.

I think back to my pastors (growing up and in college) and I think that to a man they served willingly. That doesn't mean they were perfect, but they served because they wanted to serve and did their best to serve as the Lord Jesus served.

II. Motivated by eager service

There is a little overlap between “willingly” and “eagerly.”

A. The negative: not for sordid gain

1. The word here has the connotation of “dishonest gain”
2. Not a word for the church to “keep the pastor humble by not paying him”
 - a. The Lord Jesus said, “the worker deserves his wages” (Lk 10.7)
 - b. Paul echoed the same in 1 Tim 5.18
3. Rather a word to the pastor about where his heart lies

It is well known that some preachers seem very preoccupied with money.

I read a story the other day about a Brooklyn pastor “known for wearing designer outfits and extravagant jewelry.” He was robbed at gunpoint in a church service last Sunday. Get this:

“The NYPD said they received a report that the suspects took more than \$1 million worth of jewelry and then fled the location on foot.”³ (It was on CNN, it must be true!)

³ Kristina Sguelgia CNN, “Brooklyn Pastor Says He and His Wife Were Robbed of More than \$1 Million in Jewelry While Preaching,” CNN, accessed July 27, 2022, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/07/25/us/brooklyn-pastor-robbery/index.html>.

The pastor said, "It's not about me being flashy. It's about me purchasing what I want to purchase," he said. "It's my prerogative to purchase what I want to purchase. If I worked hard for it, I can purchase what I want to purchase."

B. The positive: eager service

1. Again, an adverb used only here

- a. But a noun form used esp. in 2 Cor 8, 9, referring to the "readiness" to raise the offering Paul was collecting for Jerus. church
- b. Also used Ac 17.11 of the eagerness of the Bereans to search the Scriptures
- c. Jesus used an adjective form describing the disciples' sleepiness in the garden: "the spirit is willing (eager) but the flesh is weak" (Mt 26.41, Mk 14.38)
- d. Finally, Paul spoke of his eagerness to preach the gospel in Rome also (Rm 1.15)

2. Etymology: *prothumos*

- a. *pro* – pronoun, "for, before, in front of, ahead of"
- b. *thumos* – noun, "passion"
- c. So, in sense, "forwardness of passion" or "eagerly"

This kind of spirit only comes from love of the flock (and of the Lord). When I do best as a pastor, it is out of an eager heart for the people of the church.

Selfishness kills eagerness.

III. Modelling desired discipleships

A. Negative: not an overlord

1. Another compound word

"The simple verb *kurieuō* means 'to control, rule, to be lord or master of.' The preposition *kata*, 'down,' indicates intensity and depicts a heavy-handed use of authority for personal aggrandizement that manifests itself in the desire

to dominate, accompanied by a haughty demand for compliance.”⁴

2. Again, back to the “overseer” as foreman model: not a biblical model for shepherding
 - a. The “overdoing it” quality of the word does imply some authority to the pastor’s office
 - b. Some will mention the shepherd’s staff, used at times to correct and guide the sheep
 - c. But this isn’t the model of leadership the Lord gave us: see foot washing ceremony — he came among us as a servant

B. The interesting contrast: “proving to be examples”

1. Lit. “but as types becoming of the flock”
2. In other words, the pastor should be exactly what he wants the people to be

These are very convicting words from my side of the pulpit. Would I want to pastor a flock of people who were exactly like me??

On the other hand, these word ought to goad us forward in Christian growth because the Lord wants everyone to serve, to lead, whether pastors or not.

Conclusion:

Proposition: The work of the shepherd demands a transformed temperament in the pastor first, so it can translate to the people second.

⁴ Hiebert, 305.