

Sermon Title: Why Have Pastors?
Scripture Text: Eph. 4:11-12 (Ephesians #24)

Speaker: Jim Harris
Date: 12-12-21

We are back to Ephesians Chapter 4 yet again this morning, and I'm going to continue the, you might think *excruciatingly slow* pace through Verses 11 and 12; and then, when we return to Ephesians after Christmas and New Year, we'll go much more smoothly through the remainder of this sentence, which goes from Verse 11 through Verse 16, and is all about what God has designed for His Church—the Body of Christ (Col. 1:18).

Last time, we introduced the "Unity Team Leaders"—the whole theme of this section is "unity"—and we only got to three of the four groups in this team; and today, we're going to major on the fourth one. Verse 11 reads: "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers" (NASB-1995, and throughout, unless otherwise noted).

That might look like five, but it's only four. The Greek literally says: "some as *the* apostles...some as *the* prophets...some as *the* evangelists, and some as *the* pastors and teachers." So we're going to try to answer the question today: "Why Have Pastors?"

There are a lot of ideas out there about what pastors are. There are some extreme positions, like you would find in the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Churches, where there is a totally different standard of holiness associated with those who are called "pastors"—most often requiring celibacy, and having super spiritual authority, that they can say certain words over the elements of Communion and "literally" transform them into the body and the blood of Jesus Christ. Well, that's *extreme!* I mean, that is *way out there!* You can't even take a running leap off the diving board of your Bible and get to where any of those things come from! (cf. Prov. 30:6)

There are a lot of other ideas as well, even among Protestants and Evangelicals. In my very first few months as a teaching pastor, after I had been sent out from a church, I had a layman take me out to lunch; he wanted to explain to me that as a young man, I needed to understand that God had made me the Chief Executive Officer—the CEO—of this spiritual corporation, and that I needed to act like it. Now, there is a *certain* element of truth behind that: Yes, you have a responsibility of *leadership*—accept it, and lead. But I explained to him that there is no analogy between the Chief Executive Officer of a corporation and an elder in the Church of God; maybe there *is* an analogy to be made, but they are two *very* different things. Ironically, a few months after that, there were some things that had come to light and needed to be dealt with; and I was asked if I would make my recommendations about whether anybody needed to leave the church staff, and there was one member of the church staff that I felt was not a good fit, and I said, "We need to prayerfully dismiss him and send him a different way"—and the guy who told me that I was the CEO then voted to fire me! Interesting little twist in that thing.

Stuff like that happens. Now, in theological circles not far from ours, there are others who have yet another idea that the pastor is like a higher-ranking "Super-Elder," and he is in charge of all the other elders and everything else; and *he alone* determines who ought to be hired by the church for fulltime ministry. I think maybe the CEO-guy might have come from a background like that. But no, there is not a *different office* for a pastor/teacher, compared to the other elders of the church.

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There are others who think kind of on the other extreme, toward what we would call "Congregationalism"—they think of the pastor as a hired hand who is responsible to give equal representation and equal emphasis and equal attention to all of the desires of all of the segments of the congregation, and make sure that there are no troubles; in other words, he is a "Divine People-Pleaser." And you know how that works—you *can't* please everyone. You *must* please God—that's the point (Gal. 1:10).

When we come to this text, and we see this fourth group—it's called here "pastors and teachers"—it's *one* office, described by *two* terms. The best way to describe it would be: "Pastor/Teacher" or "Teaching Pastor." I think the Heritage Bible Church bylaws use the term "Teaching Pastor."

The term "pastor"—which is actually the translation of the Greek word for "shepherd"—that word implies feeding, caring, guidance, ruling, protecting the flock...everything that a shepherd does (cf. Jn. 10:11-13). The term "teacher" implies instruction and training. Now, as I said: The grammar of this passage makes it clear that these are two parts of one office—or, a two-part description of one office, because there is one definite article in front of the two of them. So, think of it as "Pastors who are Teachers" or "Teachers who are Pastors."

Here's a bit of Bible trivia for you: For some inexplicable reason, there is only *one time* in the entire New Testament, in any English translation I have ever seen, that the Greek word *poimēn*—which is "shepherd"—is ever translated "pastor." Now, what does the word "pastor" mean? Well, "pastor" is a *Latin* word which means: "shepherd." *All* the other times that that word occurs, it gets translated into English as "shepherd" *except* Ephesians 4:11, where they translated it "*pastors* and teachers." Well, I *never* have figured out why that is.

Remember last week, I introduced you in our Bible reading to the "Legacy Standard Bible"—the new update of the New American Standard Bible-1995 Edition—which is devoted to translating words *consistently*, and showing where they are repeated, and things like that. It just occurred to me yesterday when I was making my last pass through this sermon, and I thought, "I bet the Legacy Standard Bible got it right!" And I went and read the Legacy Standard Bible in Ephesians 4:11, and it says: "He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as *pastors* and teachers." Now I have a question, the first time at the Shepherd's Conference that I'm able to pin down one of those guys who were part of that translation team: "*Why?*" There is *no reason at all!* It means "shepherd"! But because of that *one quirk* of using the *Latin* word in *one* place, we have this whole idea—in the English-speaking world, when you say "pastor," people know what you mean: Usually, it's someone who is supported by the church in fulltime ministry. And that's not *far* off from what is here, but I will never understand that.

So, the Biblical description is that there is, among the leadership of the local church, one—or there could be more than one—of a group of elders in the local church, described as "Teaching Pastor"—or, "Pastor/Teacher."

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Paul was writing to the church at Ephesus. He had spent a long time in Ephesus. Ephesians 4 is the place he goes most in depth about the ecclesiology, the way that the church is supposed to work. We want to understand what Paul had in mind when he wrote "pastors and teachers."

To do that, we need to take a side-trip to something that he wrote later. Not terribly long after this, but a few years after this, he wrote a personal letter to the man who was serving as the Teaching Pastor of the church at Ephesus—so we *know* that this is what he had I mind for how he expected that church to run. So, a lot of what we are going to talk about in Ephesians 4:11-12 today comes from *this* passage: First Timothy Chapter 5, Verses 17 and 18.

Here, Paul is helping young Timothy—who may have had somebody come and tell him he's the CEO, or whatever else they might have done; Paul is helping him out, giving him some things to bolster his understanding of the ministry. He had left him there to identify and remove some people who were teaching some "strange doctrines" (1 Tim. 1:3), and he wanted Timothy to build the right kind of leadership to be around him (1 Tim. 3:2-13); so he wrote this to him: First Timothy 5:17-18—"The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing,'"—you'll find that in Deuteronomy 25:4—"and, 'The laborer is worthy of his wages.'"—and that's a quote from Jesus (Lk. 10:7).

So, this passage identifies *some* of the elders, who are meant to be supported by the congregation. In the context, this word "honor" refers to material and financial support. It is used that way in Verse 3 in this same chapter, where it applies to widows who have met certain spiritual benchmarks and should be kept from being on the streets by the generosity of the church—they should be financially be assisted by the church; that's what it means to "give honor."

So, in the case of "*double honor*," obviously this means that these men should be supported by the church, and you should double their salary every year. No, no, wait, no! That was my marginal note! "Double honor"—there's a play on the word there: "Honor"—yes, "honor" them by supporting them so that they can do the ministry to the very best of their ability (cf. 1 Cor. 9:14); but it also means: to hold them in high esteem and make sure that they are compensated *well*, so that they *are* set free to do ministry in a fulltime kind of way.

Now, would you notice: *This* applies to those who "rule well"; so there are some pieces to put together here. This passage applies to *any* elder who distinguishes himself in leadership among *the rest* of the elders. All of the elders *together* collectively share the responsibility for overseeing the flock, caring for the flock, and feeding the sheep.

But you have these concentric circles, if you will: The *main* circle is the Church, the Body of Christ. You are saved or you are lost; and if you are saved, you are inside that circle—you are part of the Church (Eph. 1:22; 5:23-25, 27; Col. 1:18, 24; Heb. 12:23).

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Now, among the Church, there is a *much smaller* circle of "the elders." Who are they? Well, back up to First Timothy Chapter 3; parallel passage in Titus Chapter 1—it describes the character qualities of the spiritual maturity of those who ought to be recognized as "the elders."

And then, there are those who assist the elders; they are called the "deacons." The qualities are almost identical, except that the elders also have the responsibility for the overall oversight and the teaching ministries of the church.

So you have the big circle: the Church; the small circle: the elders. *All* of the elders "rule." The word translated "rule" here also means "lead." They accept the responsibility for the direction, the accountability, the plans where everything is going.

Now, among the elders, who all "rule," *some* "rule well." In *any* group that takes on a responsibility, someone—or, someones—are going to become the leaders among the group, the leaders among the leaders. All elders are equal in character; all elders are equal in the shared responsibility for overseeing the flock; but some "rule well."

Now, there's one *smaller* circle. Do you see that word "especially"? It's a very accurate translation of a word that points to yet another subcategory. Primarily, the ones who are to be supported are the elders, the elders who distinguish themselves, and "especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching." That phrase literally says that they "labor hard in the Word and in teaching."

So, smaller and smaller circles: There are leaders among the elders who are to be supported by the church.

Now, let's make a few observations here: God intends for there to be—we usually use the word "plurality"—a plurality of elders in each church (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5; Jas. 5:14). "Plurality" means: not singular, *plural*—more than one. There is meant to be more than one. And among those elders of the church, I think there is a very strong implication that there should be a variety of gifts among them. But you will find that, every time the word "elder" is used in the New Testament in conjunction with the local church, it is always in the plural. There is not "The Church of Timothy," it's the church *in* Ephesus that has *elders*—plural. So it's not one-man leadership; that is contrary to what the Bible says.

And as I say, there is a pretty strong implication: They *should be* diverse in their gifts, their personalities, and the things that they do. There are those who distinguish themselves among the elders; they "rule well," so they become leaders among the equals of the elders. All elders rule, but some excel.

Now, *some* specialize in, and they work especially hard at, knowing God's Word and communicating it. If you read the qualifications for elders, *all* elders have to understand the Scriptures, to "be able...to refute those who contradict"—I love that translation in Titus 1:9—able to handle the Word of God and to "refute" when false teaching comes. That requires a certain level of knowledge.

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Those who distinguish themselves in leadership, and "especially those who work hard," should also be supported by the church. Why? Well, supporting them means they don't have to do a "job"—as in, a secular vocation—and therefore, they can devote themselves fulltime to working hard at understanding the Word and teaching (cf. Acts 6:2, 4).

So, *all* pastors and elders have to be competent in "handling" Scripture (2 Tim. 2:15). They are called to be accountable for the overall teaching of the church, and the quality of that teaching, and making sure that false teaching is kept out (e.g., Titus 1:10-11).

But there *is* a distinction. Some people use this distinction—I think this is mostly from the world of Presbyterianism; and there are a lot of Presbyterians who are truly on their way to Heaven, so you'll have a lot of brothers and sisters there—but in some of their churches, they make the distinction by saying, "This passage says there are two kinds of elders. There are 'lay' elders and 'pastoral' elders."

I'd like to suggest to you: That's not *exactly* the right way to describe it. When they *mean* some are *supported* by the church and some are *not* supported by the church—okay, I can live with that. But *all* elders are "shepherds." The elders, collectively, *are* the shepherds, and their responsibility is to watch over—"oversee"—the whole flock (see Acts 20:17, 28). So I don't like to make too big of a dichotomy between "lay" and "pastoral" elders—*as if* one has authority over the other.

It's like when people use the term "Senior Pastor." I used to really cringe at that. Now I *am* a senior, and sometimes I think they mean "Fossilizing Pastor." But it's not "Senior" in the sense of *above* anybody else. *All* the elders, collectively, share the *equal* responsibility for the oversight of the souls and the ministry of the church. The distinction simply is: those who are supported by the church, and those who are not. If you want a way to remember that: Some of us are paid to be good; some of us are just good for nothing. It'll help you remember! There's a play on words there, you understand that.

Think about working your way through the Book of Acts, everything that you see there. In *every* ministry situation that you can observe in the New Testament, there is *always* teamwork. You don't have rogue Apostles going off and starting their own thing! Sometimes, one might have gone to a specific place and been the first contact there. *Always*, there is teamwork. And in *every one* of the teams, there is always someone who leads when it comes to teaching and preaching. There was *never* a time when any of the Apostles were together, and Peter was present, that anybody else but Peter did the public speaking, right? And you say, "Well, that was *Peter*. He was a big mouth."

How about Paul? Paul *always* built a team! Paul was always *adding* to the team. He was spinning off people from the team, and sending them different places—like he left Timothy in Ephesus to correct some problems there, like he sent Titus to Crete. He was *always* building a team, and *every* time they went someplace, who did the public speaking? Who did the preaching? Who did the debating? It was always the one most gifted to do that (e.g., Acts 14:12). That doesn't mean it has to always be *one*, but you understand: There is leadership in all of those situations.

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Now, I want to make a little comment about something. It's a school of thought among some very fine churches these days; but, in my humble opinion, I think it goes *too far* in one direction.

Here's the deal: Look at American "Churchianity" over the last 150 years or so, and you will find some *marvelously* gifted Bible-teaching preachers. You will also find a lot of charlatans; and you'll find a lot of people who have built an empire around a personality, and who have greatly *abused* the position of "Teaching Pastor."

That's still true today, it still goes on a lot today. I've been a part of helping start several churches; and in one in particular and another one to a lesser degree, there has been someone who has come along who has *seized* all the power as a pastor, and *wrung the life out* of a body of believers.

Well, with that going on, and in wanting to not let someone become an autocratic Diotrephes-type—if you read Third John, "Diotrephes" was the man who put people out of the church and usurped all the power for himself—they want to develop appropriate accountability—elders to elders—and appropriate teamwork. It's a *good thing*, in my humble opinion, that in the last 50 or so years, this concept of recognizing the "Plurality of Elders" in the local church has been *rediscovered*, if you will, and *reemphasized*—and that's a *good thing*, and I have been part of that movement, and I'm all for it.

But the thinking that goes *too far*—it *is* around—is the idea that elders, since they all share the same responsibility and the same accountability to the Lord for the oversight of the church, therefore they should serve in *all* aspects of ministry *equally* and *interchangeably*. In other words: An elder is an elder is an elder, and you can plug any of them in anyplace with equal effectiveness.

That idea *flies in the face* of the exact words of First Timothy 5:17-18. There is a subcategory of a subcategory of elders. *All* the elders "rule." Some "rule well," especially well; that doesn't mean the others rule poorly, but some distinguish themselves. And "especially" then—the *smallest* group—"those who work hard at preaching and teaching." Now, it is a blessing if there is more than one in a congregation who is really good at preaching in public—that's a good thing. But it's not a blessing to try to force people to serve in ways that maybe they are not suited for. Maybe they're not equipped by God's grace; maybe they're not *gifted* for doing that.

There *are* some places—and a few of them do this, I have to admit, quite well—where the elders are systematically rotated through the pulpit, week by week. Now, with a unique set of people, that can be good. But I promise: If you had, say, six different people who preached, and you rotated them every six weeks, if you look back over a year, you would be—just humanly speaking, it would be the most natural thing in the world—you would be paying attention to see who seems to be bearing the most fruit, who seems to connect with the most people; and you would find, it's going to boil down to, usually, one or two that *distinguish* themselves; and they ought to be set apart—supported by the church—to pour themselves into "working hard at preaching and teaching."

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The elders of a church need to be *elders*—plural, there needs to be a plurality of them—and I submit to you: They need to be diverse—in their *giftedness*, probably in their *personalities*, and in their *experience* in ministry. I have served alongside a lot of people in the half-century that I have been involved in "professional" ministry, if you will; and some of those can run circles around me in certain aspects of ministry.

I think especially of empathy. I mean, I am *totally* empathetic to your problem. If you have a problem, I will give you the verse—go away, memorize it, and don't bug me! Eh, maybe not *quite* that harsh. But *some* people are just so good—we can be in the same meeting, and I can come away and say, "Wow, that was good," and somebody else can say, "Well, yeah, that was good, but did you notice that Betty looks a little down today?" I say, "No."

Some people are *really good* on that level—and some of them are *not as good* at parsing Greek verbs, or explaining what something means. *Not* every elder is the best at every aspect of ministry!

And First Timothy 5 seems to explain it pretty well. First Timothy 4 seems to explain it pretty well. The elders, collectively, share this responsibility; and that's why God designs for a plurality of elders to serve as a team.

Now, I want you to look afresh at two other verses. There were *also* written, in this *very same era* as Ephesians Chapter 4 and First Timothy Chapter 5—right in the beginning of the Church—the Book of Hebrews. Spoiler Alert: "Hebrews" was written to Jews who were Christians, so this is the very early Church.

Hebrews 13:7 is where we'll start: "Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith." Now, notice: "Remember *those* who"—that's *plural*. Who "led" these people in the early steps of their development of their walk with Christ—even *before* the Gospel went mainly to the Gentiles? It was a *team* of people. In the chapter before this, they had been exhorted to look back to the chapter even before that, and observe those in the Old Testament who had lived by faith; and then the writer of Book of Hebrews takes it a step further, brings it into *their* lives, and says, "Pay attention to those leaders, and how they live."

And by the way: He mentions three responsibilities there of the leaders—the pastors, the elders, the deacons, if you will. Number 1—They "lead," or, they "rule"; Number 2—They "speak the Word of God"; and Number 3—They set an example for people to "imitate." In other words: They lead both by proclaiming what God says and by living according to His Word in a credible way, and they work as a team.

Now, skip down ten verses. Very similar subject, and notice again the plurals: Hebrews 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."

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Now here, he just generically mentions "leaders." Ten verses before that, he just said, "those who led you." Well, there had been more revelation given by the time of First Timothy Chapter 5 to define those offices, but the word "leaders" is not the word for "elder," it's not the word for "shepherd," it's not the word for "overseer," it's not the word for "deacon"; it just lumps them all together as "the leaders."

And what are we to do with "leaders" in the church? Well, "obey" them, unless they're telling you to do something contrary to Scripture—in which case, the Scripture tells you what to do to challenge, correct, and if necessary, remove them from their position. Unless they're telling you to do something contrary to Scripture (cf. Acts 5:29), "obey" the "leaders"—and to do so is for you to obey the Lord; the Lord will work through them.

Second thing: "submit to them." The word "submit" in the New Testament *always* means "to voluntarily arrange yourself in order under someone else's leadership." There is *no* place that anybody is ever told to make somebody else submit—*never, ever*—but we are *all* called to *voluntarily* submit to those in leadership.

It's the same word he used for wives in relationships to husbands; it is used for *you* in relation to your employer; and it's used for all of us in relation to civil authorities. God designed for His Church, the Body of Christ, in *each* of its local manifestations—every culture, every city, every place around the world, in every era—to be led by a group of godly leaders. This is how He designs for all the different manifestations of His Body in all the different places that the Gospels goes, with different emphases, different spheres of influence which are unique to each church—it's *always* the same general plan.

Why should you "obey" and "submit" to church leaders? Well, it's pretty straightforward here: because "they keep watch over your souls." The word that is translated "watch over" implies literally "sleeplessness"—being *constantly* alert.

And would you notice very carefully: They "will give an account." "Account" for what? Account for how they kept "watch over your souls." It is *not* a trifling thing to be a leader in a church! I can assure you that those who seek that position because of a sense of ego, or being power-hungry—there is *always* a wreck down that road. Those who accept the responsibility to serve here as an elder or a deacon, regardless of their individual responsibilities, they *care for your soul*, and they want you to *thrive* as a child of God.

When I was called to write that curriculum for training pastors in Russia, and I had to write one of the courses for developing leaders and training leaders, I got the tip that *every single pastor* in any of the evangelical churches in Russia, when he is recognized as a pastor, *always* they read Isaiah 66, Verse 2; and it was like, "Don't you dare leave that verse out, or they won't pay any attention to the rest of what you wrote." Well, you can look at it in its context, but the last half of that verse says this. This is Yahweh talking—remember, God's name: "the Lord"—He says: "But to this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word." That's how they search for pastors: "Who, when you give him a Bible, starts trembling?"—not necessarily physically, but, "Who is *humbled* by the authority of the Word of God?"

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And would you notice also, from Hebrews 13:17, that it is "unprofitable for *you*" to cause "grief" for those who "watch over your souls," and "will give an account" for it. The word that is translated "grief" is more often translated "groaning."

I can tell you: Anybody that has been doing this to any extent for very long understands what the Apostle Paul wrote in Second Corinthians. "Oh, yeah, I've been beaten, shipwrecked, left for dead, all of that. And you know what's worse? The daily care of the churches" (see 2 Cor. 11:28). That's the *heaviest* burden. That's what you "groan" over. That's what you lose sleep over.

Trust me: Elders have their times of sleeplessness and groaning over the welfare of *your soul*—so, "let them do" that work "with joy, and not with grief." Well, how would you let them do it "with joy"? Well, you might try: "obey" and "submit"; listen to what they say; *do* what they suggest; get on board with what they are leading people to do—and you will find *amazing* things happen.

Now, that's a pretty decent introduction to our sermon. Why Have Pastors? Well again, as I said, we are going excruciatingly slow through Verses 11 and 12, but—two legitimate questions: What Should Teaching Pastors Do? and, Why Should Saints Be Equipped?

They are both answered in Verses 11 and 12—"And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers"—what are they supposed to do?—"for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ."

The answer to Why Have Pastors is simple: "For the equipping of the saints." This is why God wants Teaching Pastors—pastors who teach. "Equipping" is a translation of that Greek word that means "to put things in order."

One of the uses of this word, outside the Bible, was for equipping a ship by making sure it had everything necessary for the voyage. If you were going to do a transoceanic trip on a ship, you would want to make sure you have enough to eat to get all the way there. You want to make sure you have enough fuel, if it's not a sailing vessel. You have to make sure that that thing is *fully* equipped.

This same word was also used in a medical context for setting a bone that was broken, by putting it in its proper place.

The general thought is: getting something ready for service. It was generally used for making something function the way it is designed to function.

Who do we equip? The "saints." "Saints" is that word that describes *all* believers (e.g., Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2). It is literally: "holy ones." A saint is a "holy one" because he or she is in Christ—His righteousness credited to their account (2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9); they "stand" in His righteousness and in His holiness (Is. 61:10; Jude 24), they "stand" in His "grace" (Rom. 5:2).

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It is an especially subtle and damaging heresy that Satan invented, to hijack this word "saint," and to apply it only to a certain very small group of dead people that ought to be venerated, and that we ought to pray to. That is *absolutely foreign* to the meaning of the word "saints"! It means: those who are "in Christ" (Phil. 1:1).

And notice, then: This passage says that every single person in the Body of Christ—every saint—should be equipped to be engaged in spiritual labor. We talk about "the ministry" and what has to be done; *no one person* does the work of the ministry! We all *collectively* do the work of the ministry; we are *all* responsible for it.

So, what does this "equipping" involve? Well, you have to know what God says, and you have to know how to make a wise *application* of what He says through His Word. Second Peter Chapter 1, Verse 3 is a classic verse; we use it often in the context of describing the sufficiency of Scripture. Well, it has to do with "equipping saints." It says: "Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence."

How do you get to know "everything" you need for "life and godliness"? By knowing God, by knowing His Son (Jn. 17:3). How do you get to know God and know His Son? By the Word that They have given to us (Jn. 5:39; 20:30-31; 1 Cor. 15:3-4; 2 Tim. 3:15). And here's how to make it a living reality in your life; here's how to joyfully be a part of the process of being equipped: Some of us have the responsibility to proclaim things on a wide scale; *all* of us have a responsibility to respond on a personal scale.

Another verse you know by heart: "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16). *All* of God's Word is "profitable" for your spiritual growth! This equips you (e.g., Jn. 17:17).

The word "teaching" refers to the truth of what God says; it's the word often translated "doctrine" (1 Tim. 4:6). Then, "reproof"—that's when the Word of God points out that your behavior doesn't match up with the "teaching" of His Word (e.g., 2 Sam. 24:10). Remember, like James Chapter 1 says: We stare into the "mirror" of His Word, and it reflects back what needs to change; that's "reproof." The Bible teaches us what is right, and also points out the error when we deviate from that (Heb. 4:12).

That leads to the third one: "correction"—that's showing you how to get your behavior back in line with the "teaching"; that's showing you how to repent, how to turn back to the right way, how to get back on course with the "teaching" (e.g., Ps. 119:59). It helps you understand forgiveness and restoration (1 Jn. 1:9; cf. Prov. 28:13; Is. 55:7).

Now, the result of "teaching" plus "reproof" plus "correction" is "training in righteousness." That word "training" is *very* closely related to the word "equipping"; it's not that they're cognates, but they talk about the same idea. The word "training" is the word *paideia*, from which we get our words "pedagogue" and "pedagogy"; it's the word that describes the instruction and the discipline of a *child* on his way to maturity.

Sermon Title: Why Have Pastors?
Scripture Text: Eph. 4:11-12 (Ephesians #24)

Speaker: Jim Harris
Date: 12-12-21

So, if you want to be "mature in Christ" (Col. 1:28, ESV), here's what you do: You take in the Word, you let it teach you, you let it reprove you, you let it correct you, and it trains you in righteousness (Rom. 12:2). *And then*—never quote Second Timothy 3:16, and then *stop there*—the sentence continues in Verse 17: "...so that the man of God may be adequate"—that means "fitted" or "complete"—"*equipped* for every good work." The word "equipped" there *is* a cognate of the word in Ephesians Chapter 4, Verse 12. It means "completed," "brought to a suitable state." If you're the ship—ready to sail; if you're the machine—ready to plug it in; if you're the car—ready to start the engine. That comes through understanding and applying the Word of God (Lk. 11:28; Jn. 13:17).

So: Why Have Pastors? Well, when you look carefully at God's Word, the job description of the Teaching Pastor is very narrowly focused on instructing believers in those things that enable them to know the Lord and serve the Lord and proclaim His "Good News" (e.g., 2 Tim. 4:2; cf. 1 Tim. 4:11-13; Titus 2:1).

Let me give you one of those golden passages; I love things like this, because it tells you God's will for your life—you don't need to pray about it, you don't need to *tweak* it; just read it and believe it: Hebrews 13:20-21—"Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd"—"pastor," "shepherd," the "caretaker"—"of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen."

It's just a constant, daily process—always nibbling away to learn more about your Savior (Phil. 3:10), to learn more about who God is (2 Cor. 3:18)—and pass it on (1 Pet. 3:15).

Paul's last letter that he wrote was to Timothy—Second Timothy Chapter 2, Verse 2—"The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." So, Paul teaches Timothy, who finds others and teaches them, who find others to teach—and on and on.

That is the Teaching Pastor's part of what we need to be all about.

Now, I want to finish the same way I did last week, except for the spectacular story about the "Fellowship of the Unashamed." I know we're moving very slowly through this, but I want to just remind you again: Why should saints be equipped? We are at the *top* of this sentence that runs six verses long here; we will put all this together in our next few visits to it. But let me read this to you. Here is the plan. And as I said: The success or failure, the growth or the atrophy, in *any* church is *directly related* to the level of buy-in on the part of *all* the people to this, the plan of God. Listen again:

"And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here

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and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love" (Eph. 4:11-16).

Now, we're going to be away from Ephesians for two Sundays, Lord willing—Christmas and the New Year. Look back a year, if you will, and ask yourself: Am I more mature in my walk with the Lord now than I was a year ago? Be honest. And: What might I do in the coming year, to be more mature in my walk with Christ than I am now? Well, see Ephesians 4:11-16, and make all the resolutions you want. More importantly: Just "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18).

My friends, "the ministry" is not *mine*—it's *ours*! "The ministry" belongs to *you*. *You* are the key to "building up" the Body of Christ! The job will *not be done* until *every* member of Christ's Body is mature—and the whole process depends on that which "every joint supplies."

Do you want those things? I trust you do. They're there for the taking! We will do our best to equip, lead, set an example, help maybe fix things that are broken, help put some wheels back on the track if they get off the track. But by God's grace, we can be what He wants us to be, collectively, as one manifestation of the Church, the Body of Christ.

Remember that thing I read last week, "The Fellowship of the Unashamed"? And do you remember how that ended up? "Lord, my colors will be easy to see." *That* is what we are after!

Father, thank You for Your grace to us, in which we stand. I pray that for each of us, our colors will indeed be easy to see, that we would be known as "the Christ-ones"—those people who love their Lord, those people who are constantly sharing the good news of eternal life through their Savior. Have Your way in each of our lives, Father. We know we live in that constant battle between reality and perfection, but help us to be growing; help us to be caring about how our walk with You is, and help us always to look with an eye to those around us—How can we help them to be more like the Savior? In whose name we pray. Amen.