



Systematic Theology

A study of the major doctrines of Scripture

TOPIC 6 – THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

LESSONS 118 – MARKS OF A HEALTHY CHURCH – PART 9

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Seven Marks of a Healthy Church

- ▶ What then are the marks of a sound church according to the Bible? We will summarize them into seven points over the next few weeks. These seven things must be present for a church to claim rightly that they are a church that is obedient to the Lord Jesus Christ.
- ▶ 1. God is worshipped in spirit and truth – Rom.12:1; Philip.3:3; John 4:5-26
- ▶ 2. Prayer is central – Acts 2:42, 1Thes.5:17
- ▶ 3. Love for Christ and the Brethren is demonstrated – 1 Pet.1:22, Jam.1:22
- ▶ 4. The Word of God is faithfully preached, taught, and heard – Acts 6:4, 13:44; Rom.10:17; 2Tim.4:2
- ▶ 5. The Ordinances of Baptism and Communion are administered – Acts 2:42; Mat.28:19
- ▶ 6. Discipline of the membership is Biblically administered – 1 Cor.5:10-13; Mat.18:15-17
- ▶ 7. Church government and leadership as instituted by the Apostles is established – Acts 14:23, 6:2-3; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9

The Role and Duties of Pastors

- ▶ In Lesson 102 we covered the qualifications for elders in the church. Today we will review the role and duties of pastors as defined by Scripture.
- ▶ Another term for these leaders is “elder.” Those who are called in the Bible elders, bishops, or overseers are those men who are called and qualified to serve as loving shepherds in His church. Christ is Lord of the church and He rules with authority through godly elders (1 Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17; 1 Thess. 5:12; Hebrews 13:7; Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-2).
- ▶ The elders and the body itself are aided by deacons, literally “servants” or to be more specific, “table waiters.” The deacons serve the body in whatever ways are needed. Distributing to the poor and needy those resources given through the church, taking care of widows and orphans, and freeing the elders for the works of prayer and preaching. This is not a position of authority or leadership, but a position of humble service to the church. There is no specific or official responsibility listed in the Scriptures for the deacon to carry out but we are told that they are to do whatever tasks the elders assign them to do in aiding them in the ministry of the church (1 Timothy 3:8-13; Acts 6:1-4).

The Role and Duties of Pastors

- ▶ Scriptural Terms for the Elders – 1 Peter 5:1-2; Acts 20:17, 28; Ephesians 4:11
- ▶ 1. Episkopas – translated “bishop” in most Bibles, the word means an “overseer, guardian, decision maker, or manager.”
 - ▶ a. 1 Peter 2:25 – Christ is the “overseer” of our souls
 - ▶ b. Philippians 1:1 – the leaders of the church at Philippi are called “bishops”
 - ▶ c. 1 Timothy 3:1 – The position of “bishop” is a good one to be desired by qualified men
 - ▶ d. 1 Timothy 3:2 – A “bishop” must meet qualifications listed in vs. 2-7
 - ▶ e. Acts 20:28 – told to shepherd the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made them “overseers”
- ▶ In Romans and Greek usage culturally, the “overseer” (episkopas) was an authority figure representing Caesar in a conquered territory (Pontius Pilate was the Roman episkopas in Jerusalem). The term signified the person’s authority, their accountability to a higher authority above them, and their task of introducing a new order of life to a conquered people.

The Role and Duties of Pastors

- ▶ 2. Presbuteros – translated “elders” it means one who is older or mature. It also refers to a “council of elders” (plural).
- ▶ a. Acts 14:23 – a new church is planted by appointing elders
- ▶ b. Acts 20:17 – Paul sent for the elders at the church in Ephesus
- ▶ c. 1 Peter 1:1; 5:1-2 – the churches scattered over Asia had elders
- ▶ Biblically, the elders (plural) “rule” the church by unanimous decision led by the Spirit and guided by the Word of God. (1 Cor 1:10; Eph 4:3; Phil 1:27; Phil 2:2).

The Role and Duties of Pastors

- ▶ 3. Poimen – translated “pastor” , the word means shepherd, one who cares for, protects, and leads.
- ▶ a. Hebrews 13:20-21 – Christ is our shepherd
- ▶ b. 1 Timothy 5:17 – the labor of shepherding refers to effort, not amount
- ▶ c. 1 Timothy 3:1-7 – They must be qualified men
- ▶ d. Titus 1:6-9 – Restatement of qualifications
- ▶ e. Ephesians 4:11 – they are given by Christ to His Church
- ▶ The imagery of shepherding is used throughout Scripture to indicate the role of a caretaker. The shepherd is responsible for the health and well being of the flock. He provides both protection from harmful foods, situations, and from predators.
- ▶ In examining these terms then we see that they do describe one man in one office, that of a pastor-teacher. The term elder refers to who the man is (his identity as mature in the faith), the term overseer refers to what he does (his job as manager), and the term pastor refers to his heart as he does the job (his character as a shepherd)!

The Role and Duties of Pastors

- ▶ Scriptural Duties and Requirements for Elders – Feed, Lead, Protect
- ▶ Shepherd the Flock – 1 Peter 5:1 The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock;
 - ▶ a. Exercise oversight willingly
 - ▶ b. Without abusing power
 - ▶ c. Never for dishonest gain
 - ▶ d. With eagerness
 - ▶ e. Leading by example, not by domination

Shepherd the Flock – Feed the Sheep

- ▶ 1. Equip the Saints - Eph. 4:12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.
 - ▶ a. For the work of the ministry b. For the edification of the Body
 - ▶ c. To be unified in faith and knowledge of the Son of God
 - ▶ d. To be mature and like Christ e. To be certain of what they believe
 - ▶ f. To speak the Truth in love g. To work together in growth and edification in love

Shepherd the Flock – Feed the Sheep

- ▶ 2. Teach – charge, command, instruct
- ▶ 1 Tim. 1:3 As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, 4 nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith.
- ▶ 1 Tim. 6:17 Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.
- ▶ 2 Tim. 2:14 Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers.
 - ▶ a. To teach sound doctrine b. To refuse lies that cause disputes
 - ▶ c. Not to be haughty if they are rich d. Not to trust in riches but in the Living God
 - ▶ e. Not to strive about words to no profit

Shepherd the Flock – Feed the Sheep

- ▶ 3. Teach (cont'd)
- ▶ 1 Tim. 2:7 for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.
- ▶ 1 Tim. 4:6 If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed. 11 These things command and teach.
- ▶ 1 Tim. 6:2 And those who have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things.
- ▶ 2 Tim. 4:2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.
 - ▶ a. Faith in Jesus b. Truth c. Sound doctrine d. Contentment
 - ▶ e. Honorable living f. With longsuffering while convincing, rebuking, and exhorting

Shepherd the Flock – Feed the Sheep

- ▶ 4. Exhort
- ▶ 1 Tim. 5:1 Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers, 2 older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity. 3 Honor widows who are really widows.
- ▶ Titus 1:9 holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.
 - ▶ a. Others
 - ▶ b. And convict (convince) with sound doctrine those who contradict truth

Shepherd the Flock – Feed the Sheep

- ▶ 5. Remind
- ▶ 2 Tim. 2:14 Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers.
- ▶ Titus 3:1 Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work,
 - ▶ a. Of the gospel
 - ▶ b. To be obedient

Shepherd the Flock – Feed the Sheep

- ▶ 6. Speak
- ▶ Titus 2:1 But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine
- ▶ Titus 2:11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.
- ▶ a. Things proper for sound doctrine
- ▶ b. These things
- ▶ c. Exhortations, rebuking with all authority

Shepherd the Flock – Feed the Sheep

- ▶ 7. Minister the Word
- ▶ 1 Tim. 5:21 I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality.
- ▶ 2 Tim. 2:2 And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. 25 in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth
- ▶ 2 Tim. 3:14 But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them

Shepherd the Flock – Feed the Sheep

- ▶ 7. Minister the Word (cont'd)
- ▶ 2 Tim. 4:2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 5 But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.
 - ▶ a. Observe God's Word without prejudice or partiality
 - ▶ b. Commit the Word to faithful men who can teach others
 - ▶ c. Correct those in opposition
 - ▶ d. Continue in the Word
 - ▶ e. Preach the Word, in and out of season
 - ▶ f. Do the work of an evangelist
 - ▶ g. Fulfill your ministry and calling

Shepherd the Flock – Protect the Sheep

- ▶ 1. Reject
- ▶ 1 Tim. 4:7 But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness.
- ▶ 2 Tim. 2:16 But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness.
- ▶ Titus 3:10 Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition
 - ▶ a. Fables
 - ▶ b. Profane and idle babblings
 - ▶ c. A divisive man after one or two warnings (church discipline)

Shepherd the Flock – Protect the Sheep

- ▶ 2. Rebuke
- ▶ 1 Tim.5:20 Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.
- ▶ Titus 1:10 For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, 11 whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain. 12 One of them, a prophet of their own, said, “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.” 13 This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith,
- ▶ a. Sinners in the presence of all
- ▶ b. By stopping the mouths of insubordinate, idle talkers
- ▶ c. Sharply those not sound in the faith

Shepherd the Flock – Protect the Sheep

- ▶ 3. Withdraw, avoid, flee, and turn away from
- ▶ 1 Tim. 6:3 If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, 4 he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, 5 useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself. 11 But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. 20 O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge—

Shepherd the Flock – Protect the Sheep

- ▶ 3. Withdraw, avoid, flee, and turn away from (cont'd)
- ▶ 2 Tim. 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 23 But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife.
- ▶ 2 Tim. 3:5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.
 - ▶ a. False Teachers
 - ▶ b. Greed and evil
 - ▶ c. Profane and idle babblings, contradictions
 - ▶ d. Youthful lusts
 - ▶ e. Foolish and ignorant disputes
 - ▶ f. Evil-doers (according to 2 Tim. 3:1-5)
 - ▶ g. Foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, strivings about the Law (with false teachers)