



## The Shepherd's Exhortation, Part 2

### Selected Scriptures

A second main point is, number two, by exhortation, pastors shepherd the flock. By exhortation, pastors shepherd the flock. And as I said, I have a few sub-points about the role of exhortation in pastoral ministry, how the shepherding ministry functions. So let's consider a letter A, B, and C; letter A, B and C. Let's consider exhortation to show, A, that it *is*, that it's a thing; letter B, why it is; and letter C, what exhortation encompasses. So exhortation: it is, why it is, and what it encompasses.

Letter A: exhortation, the fact that exhortation is, the fact that exhortation exists as a key duty of the pastorate in the administration of the shepherding office. What Christ commanded the church through the eleven apostles, through the prophets in the New Testament, is delivered to believers in the local churches by those whom he called, gifted, qualified, as we have read in Ephesians 4:11.

We see the ministry, the gifts that Christ has given to the church of the Apostles and the prophets. Their ministry has passed. We have it right here written down in the New Testament. But then with, that leaves us with three other gifted offices in the church: the evangelists, and the pastors, and teachers. The means of delivering the truth, the evangelists, the pastors and the teachers. Instruction and exhortation in the ministry of the evangelists, the pastors, and the teachers.

Christ gave evangelists to churches to equip Christians for the evangelism part of the Great Commission. They provide instruction and exhortation that's all focused on Gospel proclamation. So you think about some of the key apologists that you have learned from. They're really strong in Soteriology, understanding how to discern the Gospel over and against other false versions of the Gospel or over and against other religions and other cults.

And they help you to evangelize the lost in your life. You, if you have Mormon family members or Jehovah's Witnesses friends or a Buddhist co-worker or you know some, you know, sub-Christian professing person in your workplace or whatever it is, you often tap into the work of the evangelists, read their books, listen to their podcasts, watch the videos, *The Way of*

*the Master*, things like that to help you, to strengthen you so that you can go out and be effective in your evangelism ministry.

They're strong in the theology of conversion, what are signs of conversion and are, what are false signs of conversion as well. They strengthen your discernment. They help you to clarify the Gospel and, by the way, they are key in helping you to rejoice in the Gospel, to see what a great work God has done in his sovereign work of calling you to repentance and faith in Christ.

But Christ has also given pastors and teachers, and they equip the church more broadly in all matters of life and godliness so disciples will grow to maturity and advance in holiness and strengthen in discernment and become fruitful in their disciple-making in their life, wherever that is. It's the job of pastors and teachers to instruct and exhort in sound doctrine, and in the Greek construction in Ephesians 4:11, it shows that pastors and teachers are very closely aligned, so close that some see those two roles, pastor-teacher, as a single office, just pastor, dash, teacher, pastor-teacher. That's the office.

I don't believe those terms refer to a single gift, role, or office. Pastor is one, teacher is one, but still they are so closely aligned, united in purpose, have significant crossover. So I understand why people come to the other view that both pastors and teachers, and evangelists as well, they instruct and exhort the church. Of the three, evangelist, pastors, teachers, only pastors in that list are synonymous with elders, shepherds, overseers. Evangelists, and teachers, they may well serve as elders, and some often do if they are called to that office and gifted and qualified to that office.

But you've got some evangelists who have online ministries, or you have some teachers who are seminary professors and not necessarily serving as elders in their church. It's not inappropriate. It's understandable. Only pastors synonymous with elder and shepherd and overseer. Shepherds, overseers, pastors, all the same thing. This is all synonymous, as we've said before.

We also understand from Scripture that evangelists and teachers augment the work of pastors, and pastors conduct the work of evangelists and teacher in their ministry. Paul told Timothy to do the work of an evangelist in fulfilling his ministry. So you're to do the work of an evangelist, also to,

you know, to train the church to evangelize, to give them discernment about the Gospel. Pastors also have a teaching gift to instruct the church in sound doctrine.

But it's pastors who are uniquely gifted, uniquely called. They're different than evangelists and teachers. They're uniquely to exhort the church. All Christians exhort, but pastors are to set an example for exhorting the church. Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:13, "Give your attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching." Interesting, he puts exhortation first before the teaching. He told Timothy, 1 Timothy 6:2, "These things teach and exhort."

Famously, 2 Timothy 4:2, "Preach the word, reprove, rebuke, exhort with great patience and instruction." Paul told Titus, as we just read earlier, to "appoint men as elders who hold fast to the, the faithful word," Titus 1:9, "in order that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and refute those who contradict." "These things," he says in second, in Titus 2:15, "These things exhort, speak, exhort, and reprove with all authority, and let no one disregard you in that work."

Pastors, uniquely gifted, called by Christ, set apart for this; qualified by God, made sufficient to this task, recognized by the church, ordained by other elders, they're called to the

work of exhortation in their teaching, in their preaching, to command the conscience, to call for a verdict, to call people to obedience. And in so doing they set an example for the flock.

So that's letter A. Letter B: Why is exhortation necessary? I've already touched on this a bit. Why is exhortation necessary, though, in the pastoral work, in the pastoral administration? Why must the shepherd add the voice of authority, exhortation, to the chief work of instruction? I want to take what I said earlier and expand it into several reasons, five reasons, actually. I've written down five reasons. So I'm, I'm, I'm doing a sub-sub-point. I'm going deep, deep, deep into this, alright? Why exhortation? Five reasons why exhortation's necessary in the pastoral administration.

First, first is to stimulate growth by regularly challenging the will, which tests the understanding of the truth. Why do we exhort as pastors? Why are we called to do that? We stimulate your growth by regularly challenging your will and by doing that, I'm testing the understanding of the truth. Do you understand it or do you not? I mean, how do you know whether someone has assimilated the truth? How do you know if they truly learned? It's not a matter of what people say,

what they profess to believe, what they're able to recite, what they can understand intellectually.

You know if they really do assimilate the truth and understand it by what they do, right, how they live. If you tell somebody, the end of the world is coming in thirty minutes. Thirty minutes, so make your peace with God, evangelize your family because it's coming, what, 29 minutes from now; if they sit and look at you like, you're a nut, they don't believe you, right? They have not assimilated that truth.

You press them even further. You, you muster up all the charismatic emphasis and compelling work and speech and everything that you can and show them evidence and signs within five, ten minutes and tell them the clock is ticking. And all of a sudden, they say, okay, I get it that you really believe this. I, I believe you, I understand, I get it. But then they go and do nothing. Have they really taken in what you've said?

Intellectually apprehending the truth, that's step one in learning, right? You can't believe if you don't understand. You can't repent if you don't really get what you're repenting for. Practicing the truth, though, living by, submitting to the truth, setting your priorities by the Word of God and by the truth, that is how you know whether or not someone has learned

the truth, right? It's not merely what someone says; it's how they live that matters. And if the will is not engaged, then the manner of life and the priorities don't change. And we're even right to question the assimilation of the truth, whether they really understand. We say Christ is coming again, and Christ is going to hold us to account. Do we live that way? Or do we live like everybody else? Exhortation tests the will, causes us to really think, do we really understand this? Does it really change our lives? If it doesn't, then we have not assimilated the truth. And why is that important?

Second reason we exhort, second is to warn professing Christians that profession is not enough, that hearing or even apprehending the truth intellectually is not enough. As I just said, we must live it out; truth must change us, it has to radically reorient everything in our minds, our hearts, our lives, our priorities. It changes us from the inside out. Obviously that takes time, but man, that happens right at regeneration and continues a work on until glory.

Why do we have to warn? Why do I have to use this voice of warning in exhortation? Because Jesus said Matthew 7:21, "Not everyone who says to me 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven." Jesus says true Christians are "those who do the will



of my Father," and many are going to come to him on Judgment Day making very sincere claims, even pointing to remarkable works not, and they're doing it to his face, and Jesus is going to respond to them, "I never knew you. Depart from me, you who practice lawlessness."

How we live matters. Paul says in Romans 2:13, "The hearers of the law are not just before God, but the doers of the law will be justified." James also, he says this in James chapter 1, James chapter 1, verses 22 and following, "Become doers of the word and not merely hearers, who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he's like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror, and once he's looked at himself and has gone away, he immediately forgets what kind of person he was."

So many of us can be like that, and what do we need from our fellow Christians? What do we need from our pastors? A word of exhortation to stop us from doing that, to cause us to stand up and take notice. It's happening; I did it. Become doers of the Word. "The one who looks intently," that's key, "intently at the perfect law, the law of freedom, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer, but having become a doer of the word, this man will be blessed in what he does."

Not like the other man, who lives under really a curse, a curse of looking at the law, but superficially, hearing the Word of God preached to him, but only superficially. "Ah, these prophets, they heal the wounds of my people, but lightly. They preach peace, peace, but there is no peace." That is a judgment upon a land. It's a famine in hearing the Word of God, and it's a famine and a removal of exhortation that awakens the conscience to the demands of the truth.

Persuasion by exhortation, by admonition, it challenges a disengaged will. When the intellect is properly instructed, when the will is challenged, something else happens. The heart is exposed along with the desires of the heart, along with the affections of the heart. What we really want in life and what we really want to avoid, that's exposed when our will is challenged.

And it leads to another reason that exhortation is necessary. This would be number three, and I'm going to make for you wait for it until next week. Because I just looked up and I noticed, and someone, unless someone has monkeyed around with that clock and is playing a really cruel trick on me, it's already noon. And would you believe I'm only halfway through my

notes? I love you so much I want to keep preaching, and I love you so much that we're going to call time right now. Let's pray.

Our Father, we do love you, and we thank you that we love you because the love that you have granted to us is from you. It's placed in our hearts, according to Romans 5:5, by God the Holy Spirit. And by your Spirit and by your Word, you grow that love and fan it into a flame until we are white hot with zeal for you, love for you, love for Christ, and love for your people.

We recognize that there are times when a wet blanket, so to speak, is thrown upon that flame, even endangering it to being doused and put out if it were not for your hand of grace, protection to lead us back. You do protect us and you do lead us back by this ministry of exhortation that we participate in, here in the local church. And we're thankful that you have made us members of this body, where exhortation and admonition and correction and encouragement and comfort and urging and pleading is happening all the time. I know because I hear it all the time.

Father, I'm so grateful to belong to you, and at the times when my heart even grows cold, there's someone there with a word of exhortation and a word of encouragement, even a word of

admon, admonition and correction, to help put me right again, to throw off the world and the flesh and the devil, and to give myself once again wholly unto you.

Father, I pray that you, by your Spirit and by your Word, would do a mighty work in us, that we would be those who love the truth, not just to be intellectually stimulated by the truth, but that we would love to walk in the truth, to be doers of the Word together, to encourage and exhort one another day after day, as long as it, as it is called today, lest any one of us should be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin and apostatize. Please protect us, please encourage us, strengthen us, comfort us, exhort us, and edify us. And let us do that together as the day approaches for your glory, father, we pray in the name of Christ. Amen.