**The Ministry of the Pastor-Teacher – BD06-02**

This morning we continue now with the second segment of our consideration of the place of the pastor-teacher in the local church. This is a key section of consideration because it is very difficult to find churches in which this is understood. It is very difficult to find Christians, even in Bible-teaching churches, who have clear concepts of the pastor and his position, his duties, and his responsibilities other than a lot of stereotype misconceptions.

I had a call this week from a man with a question on the tape entitled “The Neutralizing of Confessed Sin.” After we finished talking awhile, he commented on how helpful he had found the Berean tapes though he said, “I’ll have to admit that initially I had what has been called the negative volition response to what I heard.” This was interesting to me because I’ve discovered that this is a common response, a common reaction to divine viewpoint. And I think the reason for it is the extent to which churches have permitted Christians to drift away from the Word of God. They have moved into programs instead of expositions of the Word—God’s views as conveyed in the Bible. Therefore when people who are church members (have their) first contact with what God really thinks, it sounds offbeat to them. So very frequently, to the most genuine exposition of the Word of God, the average church member has a negative reaction. Later on they begin to realize that what they’re hearing is the real thing and that their past “churchianity” has given them ideas that are a complete fraud.

This was exactly what the Lord Jesus Christ experienced. He has the same problem. He brought a very true exposition of the Old Testament law and of the Old Testament Bible, the revelation as it was possessed unto that time, but what He brought was totally rejected. The reason for this was that He was contradicting what people had been led to believe by their religious leaders. So Jesus, who sounded to many people as One who spoke with authority, was welcomed by some but was deeply resented by others. They thought He talked like some big know-it-all, somebody who was above their own rabbis and the teaching they had always had, and that He thought He was better than all the instruction that their rabbis had given them. So they sought to trip Him up on His words and to contradict Him.

Interestingly enough again, these are the same reactions we find reported from people who happen to listen to some of the tapes that we make here. One person told me the other day, a man who was listening to this (certain) tape, and he said, “Now they sound like they really know everything, but I’m going to listen carefully and I’m going to catch them and trip them up in their words. I haven’t so far but I will.” Well sooner or later he probably will, but he is pained by the fact that his false assumption that he has picked up from his denomination or from our society in general, is being challenged.

Now your person background may cause you to be negative toward these doctrinal studies, not because what you hear is false, but because it’s contrary to your particular background. So I would suggest again that you learn the technique of being filled with God the Holy Spirit. Without that you can learn nothing of Bible doctrine. Then listen enough to the Word explained so you get the big picture before you make a decision. Then use what you’ve learned in practice, and test out whether these things really are so.

Now organized Christianity is fantastically shot through with misconceptions from human viewpoint. That’s the main reason that churches grow big and people are comfortable in them. The number one reason that churches grow large in Christendom is because they are shot through with human viewpoint. Consequently, people who already have the misconceptions of our society and are adapted to Satan’s world view find themselves comfortable with that kind of a climate, so that’s the kind of a church they want to go to. This can even be true of people who preach the Bible, but again do not preach it in such a way that people are put downwind of themselves so they get the drift of where they really are. People are comfortable with their own kind.

Now from the promise of the savior in Genesis 3:15, we learned last week, until the ascension of Jesus Christ to heaven, our Lord was the target of Satan’s attack in Satan’s conflict with God. But after Jesus Christ ascended, the individual Christian became the target of attack. So God therefore provided a means for the Christian’s defense against this personality who goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. God has given us defense In order to keep up operational in service. Now this defense includes the written Bible, the indwelling Holy Spirit, the local church, and the pastor-teacher. We’re particularly concentrating on the factor of the pastor teacher.

God also provided a grace system for perception. This is a system whereby you may learn spiritual things apart from your human IQ. If your learning of spiritual things were dependent on how intelligent you are, it would not be grace. It would be a merit system. So God has provided several factors that we’ve already gone over which, put together, enables you to be the greatest giant that anybody ever was in all the history of humanity. Your spiritual IQ is entirely dependent upon your personal choice. A key factor in developing this spiritual defense structure is in the believer’s soul is the pastor-teacher, and God has provided this gift to the church in order to supply the building materials for structure of spiritual maturity in the soul.

Now let’s review for just a moment, if you’ll turn back to Ephesians 4:8, what we have covered thus far. In Ephesians 4:8, we’re told that when Jesus Christ ascended to heaven, He took the saints from the Paradise section of Hades with Him, and He left here behind Him the gift of the pastor-teacher for the church. In verse 9 we’re told that the same Jesus who entered heaven had previously entered Hades at the center of the earth in connection with His death for our sins whereby He conquered Satan. Then in verse 10 we found that the Jesus who went into the lowest depths of Hades now is ascended far above the angelic attack in heaven. From this heavenly position He provides the means of our defense against Satan for every individual believer. Every Christian is in full-time service representing Jesus Christ. This is the reason Satan wants to attack and to ruin his ambassadorship.

Therefore, Christians need a properly functioning pastor-teacher to receive doctrine to do their job in the plan of God, to maintain themselves in a spiritual operational status to be able to perform what God has designed in His plan for them. This is not done when the pastor gets up and he praises people. This is not done when he socializes with the people. This is not done when he acts as a great personality. He may have the great personality of the mouthful-of-teeth style, but this won’t provide the individual believer with the elements with which he may defend himself against Satan and against his fiery darts of attack.

The spiritual defense provision of Jesus Christ is described here in Ephesians 4:10 in these final words, “fill all things.” He has now ascended into heaven far beyond the attack of Satan that He might fill all things. We very briefly touched upon this last week so I want to look this through again because this is important that you should understand. “That He might fill:” In the Greek it looks like this: “pleroo.” As we find this word in used in Scripture, we discover that there are at least four distinct meanings for this word, as the Bible uses it.

Number one: This word means to fill up a deficiency. When you are born again into the family of God, you are born with a very grave spiritual deficiency. When you come as a new member into a local church, if you’ve come from a church which has not been preaching Bible doctrine, then you come with a very grave spiritual deficiency into that particular assembly. This deficiency is met by building a spiritual maturity structure. We are talking about some things that we’re going to back in some detail, so don’t get panicky if you don’t quite get the picture now. If you stay with us you’ll have the picture.

This spiritual maturity structure is the meaning of the word “edification.” We’re going to take that up. The Bible speaks about edifying yourself. There are three distinct ideas involved in edifying, but the result is that in your soul there is a certain spiritual maturity structure, and the word edifying means a building, to build something. Now how in the world are you going to build this thing? God says you have a grave deficiency. What do you have? You don’t have a spiritual maturity structure. You’re not born into the family of God with this. You’re a complete blank. This is the purpose of the Christian life. Until you have this you’re a patsy for Satan. You’re a dumb do-do for every delusion that every religious professional comes to give you. You’ll swallow it and you’ll be exactly what the Scripture says you should not be—swayed by every wind of doctrine that comes to you, tossed by a little boat on a wild stormy sea. God says, “I have come to make you stable.” If you are an unstable Christian, here’s the reason. You don’t have a spiritual maturity structure developed within your soul.

The Lord Jesus Christ said He came to fill up all thing from heaven for us who are left here on earth under satanic attack. That word first of all means to fill up the spiritual deficiency that we have. In the grammar it has the aorist tense again. Aorist means a certain point of time when the Christian is functioning under the grace system for perception. This system which is not dependent upon human IQ. The grace system for learning spiritual things so that they are useful to you. These are not the kind of things that a lot of kids learn because they grew up in a Christian climate and so they learn a lot of spiritual things and then they live lives that are totally irrelevant to what they’ve learned. Something is wrong and there’s a very clear explanation as to what has happened internally to them in reference to what they’ve learned.

I know that you get tired of listening to Christians who are forever mouthing about their ambitions and ideals and desires for their Christian lives or for members of their family. Yet you look upon them and you know that this is never going to happen, either for them or for their children or for anybody in the circle of their influence because they’re not functioning on the grace system of perception. They’re not taking in the Word of God in a usable form. They have short-circuited the system. We’ve looked and this and we’ll look at it again in case you don’t understand this yet. And the short-circuiting of the system makes a talker instead of a performer. That’s what James means when he says, “Don’t be a hearer of the Word only, but a doer of the Word. A hearer of the Word is somebody who has short-circuited this system of learning spiritual things.

This “pleroo” is in the active voice, and that means that God does it. God is the one who provides this system. God is the one who makes this system work so that you can fill up this spiritual deficiency within yourself. And it is what is called also in the subjective. This is grammar if you want to put that in your notes, and that means that it’s potential. It’s potential. That means this can be or you can turn your back on it. It’s possible. It’s available, or you can be so smart that you rise above it and you ignore it. You can fill up your deficiency or you can just go through your whole Christian life just as deficient as the day you entered the family of God.

This word “pleroo” also means something else. It means “to possess fully.” The believer is to be controlled by what? Completely dominated by what? By Bible doctrine. To do this, you have to have this doctrine someplace where it functions.

Let’s look at it again. Here is your mind. Here is God. Here is the Word that He has provided. Here is the pastor-teacher whose job it is to explain that Word. Here is the filling of the Holy Spirit meaning all known sins confessed and all confessed sins neutralized. Now you listen and you are able to be objective. You may have the greatest wildest kind of hang-ups here this morning but if you have confessed all known sin you are free to hear, to listen, and to understand, and into your mind comes an understanding of the Word of God. Now that’s just knowledge. That’s just information. Then your will takes an act upon it. Your will may go positive or your will may go negative. If you go positive, this truth is moved down to another compartment of your being which is your human spirit.

God says that He witnesses to our spirit. He says that it is the spirit of man within us that is the contact point for His direction and for His instruction. This truth is now stored in its usable form. What does it do? Well it comes back up here into your mind. This is the conscience side. This is the perceptive side. Here’s where you learn. On your conscience builds this frame of reference that we’ve talked about. Now you have direction for your life. When you have doctrine in this respect that you have responded to, you are possessed. You are possessed by the Word of God. Jesus Christ said, “I am working from heaven to give you something to possess you fully—not just in your mind. That’s where you have it and then don’t live up to it. But also in your spirit where God will use it.

This word in the third place means something else. It also means “to influence fully.” The thing that influences the mind is this frame of reference right here. You have a basis on which you make your judgments. You have a basis of evaluations. Where did you get it? You meet a person. You observe this person. You watch his actions. You listen to his words, and you make some evaluations relative to this person. What is the basis of that? You come into a situation. You come into some activity of life. You make a judgments to whether you should do it or not do it, or whether it’s right or it’s wrong. What’s the basis?

Well you have a frame of reference and everybody has one. Either the information in this frame of reference has come from the world or it has come from the Word of God. This is why people make the most fantastic decisions. Even Christians will become infuriated over what they think is terrible treatment they’re receiving. They’re being treated unjustly—not a fair deal at all, being misunderstood. What they got wrong up here is their frame of reference so they don’t see the thing the way God sees it. If their frame of reference were right they might discover that what I’m getting is exactly right. What I’m being told is exactly right. Where I am, I understand, is exactly where my actions and my conclusions and my point of view have led me. This is your point of view. God says, “I am here to influence you fully with my point of view.

If you have a frame of reference it does several things for you. One: It gives you a basis so you can comprehend more advanced doctrine. It is because you built a frame of reference that you can understand the deeper things of the Word of God that you couldn’t grasp at first. It is the development of your frame of reference that enables you to sit in church and listen for a solid 45 minutes, alert, and grasp, and intelligently take in the Word of God. It also means that it develops a new conscience which is tuned to God. Your frame of reference fills in the conscience.

I remind you that the Greek word for conscience means co-knowledge, joint knowledge. Your conscience is something that is a result of knowledge fed into it—information fed into it. Information from the world is human viewpoint. Information from God is divine viewpoint. A conscience will guide you according to the information to which you have programmed it. The Word of God says Jesus Christ is in heaven to program your conscience so that you will be fully under his dominating direction and influence.

It also provides you therefore the basis for divine viewpoint. The frame of reference will give you content for your prayers. You won’t be praying foolishly. If you have a divinely filled frame of reference, it will give you accuracy in your witnessing. You won’t be telling people to do the wrong things in order to be saved. You won’t be putting screws and pressures upon people. You’ll understand that salvation is a matter of giving people right information and the Spirit of God performing with that information in the life of that individual, and you’ll know what the information is that you should give.

You’ll have discernment as a believer priest, and that’s a very precious thing. Nothing is so pathetic as a Christian who doesn’t have discernment in spiritual things. A Christian who cannot discern himself. A Christian who cannot evaluate himself. A Christian who cannot judge himself as he really is and judge what’s behind his actions. We Christians are in the habit of putting up fronts.

Do you know what a smokescreen is? Here’s a Christian who wants to do something in life. Now he has to have an excuse. He’s ashamed to say, “This is what I want to do.” It’s some trivia that he wants to be preoccupied with. Some rat-hole down-the-drain investment of life. Maybe that Christian has been functioning in a very profitable and useful productive way. Now he’s tired of that, not that he’s not productive, but he’s tired of it so he puts up a smokescreen. He says, “I’m tired. I’m old. I’m busy. I’m worn out. I’m something.” So you think, “Oh, this poor person.” So you start bringing cookies and lemonade over to comfort him while he sits in his wheelchair at home, and you discover that he’s not at home. He’s running around doing all kinds of things. He’s humping just as hard as he’s ever humped. He has put up a smokescreen because he wanted to do something else. He didn’t have the discernment to look at himself. Who do you think you’re kidding? You’re not going to con God. Have the discernment to see what it is that is really behind the actions of people and the actions of yourself.

This word means one thing more. This is what Jesus Christ is also doing. That is to fill with a certain quality. The quality that God wants to fill us with is the quality of divine good, not the cheap quality of human good. Divine good can be produced in our lives in three ways. One: It comes from God through the filling of the Holy Spirit. Divine good is produced in us from our human spirit. How? Because we express doctrine that we have gone positive toward. We produce divine good also from our soul as the result of having a spiritual maturity structure built within our soul. We’re going to look at this spiritual maturity structure in the weeks that lie before us in great detail. This is what it’s all about. That’s what we’re headed for.

“All things,” He says, “I came to fill. I came to fill up a deficiency to give you something to possess you fully, to influence you fully and to fill you with a certain quality.” In Ephesians 3:19 will you notice something? The apostle Paul says, “To know the love of Christ.” Now here’s divine love. Here’s what He prays for them. “To know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.”

I wasn’t to show you something about this word “knowledge” here, and we’re still talking about the “all things.” This word “knowledge” in the Greek looks like this: “gnosis.” The apostle Paul says, “I want you to know the love of Christ, a divine agape love, which passes knowledge. Now what does he mean that it passes knowledge? I want you to have something which is more than knowledge. I want you to have something which is beyond a mental grasp of the truth. Here’s how you can learn about the love of God. You can sit in church and hear the doctrine, and you have it up here in your understanding, and you have a mental grasp of what it is not to have ill word toward any human being.

Now Paul says that’s not enough. What you have up here is “gnosis.” That’s knowledge, but he says, “I want you to have something beyond that. And we have a Greek word that is exactly that. It is “epi,” above and beyond knowledge. It’s “epignosis.” What he is saying is, “I want you to have something that is beyond that.” Where do you have that? Right here in your human spirit. This is “epignosis.” This is full developed mature knowledge because you responded positively to it.

So what we’re saying is that there are many Christians who might even sit in church and hear doctrine and they got “gnosis.” They have knowledge, but they do not have full knowledge because they went negative or neutral toward the truth. Therefore it is absolutely useless to them. You cannot use knowledge from your mind to guide your life. You can only use it from your spirit where God directs you.

So Paul says to know the love of Christ, divine love, which passes “gnosis” that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. And here you have this word “pleroo” again that we have looked at with its four meanings. To have full developed possession. His purpose in this prayer is a fullness of God in the soul of the believer, a spiritual maturity structure.

So a grasp of divine love in the human spirit is what he’s looking for. Now would you look at Colossians 1:9? Colossians 1:9 says, “For this cause we also since the day we heard it do not cease to pray for you and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will.” Here the word for “knowledge” is this word “epignosis.” That you might be filled, and here’s our word “pleroo,” fully possessed, fully dominated, fully guided by the full knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. In verse 10 you have it again, “That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the full knowledge (“epignosis”) of God.

The source of all things of Ephesians 4:10, that Jesus Christ is in heaven providing for us, is the same thing (these “all things”) is the same thing as full knowledge in your human spirit. This is “epignosis.” This is the thing the Word of God is driving toward. Not just something that’s “gnosis” but something that’s full “gnosis” grasped in your spirit. This (“gnosis”) is in the mind. This 9“epignosis”) is in the human spirit. It’s important that you understand the difference because we’re going to structure a great deal upon this.

From that let’s look at the functioning of the pastorate. Here is the technique for spiritual maturity. Let’s review it again. How are we going to secure the “all things” by which we build a structure of spiritual maturity in the soul? Well the pastor-teacher instructs the congregation in the whole realm of doctrine. He does this by explaining it verse-by-verse. He does this by giving you the background of the scriptures on the history and the conditions of the times in which it was written. Then he summarizes the doctrine in certain summaries.

Next you listen under the filling of the Holy Spirit to this exposition and the grace system enables you if you respond positively to put this truth into your human spirit. You’ve listened. You’ve understood in spite of your hang-ups. Now you go positive or negative. You go positive and what is “gnosis” in the mind becomes “epignosis” in your spirit. If you’re negative, it’s simply left there. What is false will not enter. You have transferred this knowledge. It’s an act of faith. You believed God. Now you have full knowledge. This is what’s going to provide you with all that you need to fill up the deficiency of your spiritual life. You will be breathing out this “epignosis” toward God and toward man.

**2 Corinthians 10:5**

It builds up on the conscience side of the mind this frame of reference so that you have a guide for all you do. This is what 2 Corinthians 10:5 means about bringing our minds into captivity to Christ. 2 Corinthians 10:5: Here’s how you do that: “Casting down imaginations (that’s human viewpoint) and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God (divine viewpoint), and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” Now what good does it do to run around saying, “Dear Christian, bring every thought into the captivity of Christ.” So you go home and say, “Yes, that’s what I’m going to do. I’m going to put every thought into the captivity of Christ. Everything I think I’m going to say, ‘Lord, capture this thought.’” So you’re going to psych yourself into something that is not going to last or accomplish anything.

The Bible is not telling you to do something way out in goony land that you can’t accomplish. When it says, “Bring every thought to the obedience of Christ,” it means just exactly that. How are you going to do it? Through the taking in of Bible doctrine when a pastor-teacher is functioning, cranking it out to you, so that you can grasp it and understand it and you know what the Holy Spirit means and then you can respond to it and you can put it into your spirit and it will come up here and it will affect your conscience and you can build a frame of reference and your thinking will be the thinking of God. That’s how you capture your thoughts for God.

This knowledge that we have down here is the basis for this spiritual maturity we’re going to build. Ephesians 4:12: Let me read you a few verses here. “For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying (the building up) of the body of Christ.” We’re going to look at this verse next Sunday morning in great detail.

Verse 16 says, “From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, making increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” Building up again a structure of maturity.

Verse 29 again speaks about building up a structure. “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth but that which is good to the use of edifying (building a spiritual maturity structure) that it may administer grace unto the hearers.”

So the objective of the pastor-teacher is to give you the information to build this maturity. This is reached as the assembly gathers together to learn the Word—t he communication of doctrine to you as a group as believer priests so that in privacy you may respond. Remember that any time a preacher invades your privacy, he’s out of line. Any time somebody invades your personal privacy, you know that that person is acting out of the will of God.

Now you as parents have the right to invade the privacy of your children, and you are playing the fool if you do not invade the privacy of your children, and I’m talking about the teenage children as well. Until these kids have come to a point of certain personal maturity that they are on their own it is your business to know what they’re thinking, what they’re saying, where they’re going, what they’re doing, who their friends are, and what they’re saying with them. You make it your business to find out whatever you have to do to find out. You are responsible before God to guide them in all the details of their lives.

But once you are a mature believer, you are responsible for your own spiritual life. So we deliver this in such a way that you may respond to it. You get this full knowledge and you build your structure. It doesn’t matter when it comes to the performance and the functioning of the ministry which is what we’re talking about this morning, the functioning of the pastorate, it doesn’t matter how many people are sitting out there listening.

There’s this notion among Christians that the value of a local church is to be judged by how many people are sitting out there listening. Yet history is filled with the fact that the greatest results in the kingdom of God have again and again come out of a handful of people who were oriented to the Word of God in the pattern that we’re speaking of. Tremendous effective men raised up out of little groups who got across the Word of God.

You heard Ron Blue say it last Sunday night, speaking about one very small group of believers. You could just see it on his face. He was just thrilled and enthused, overjoyed at the tremendous results out of this group of believers. They’re a small group, but I happen to know something about that group of believers. They’re about the most hardcore doctrinal instructing group you’ll find anywhere on the face of the earth in the kingdom of God. If there’s anything they do, they crank out Bible doctrine. And it was evident to this missionary that these are the people who are accomplishing something.

You play the world’s success game when you start talking about and relating in your mind, and there’s where your poison comes. Your mind thinks, “Are we doing anything worthwhile? Well let’s see. How many people are sitting here?” Then you decide whether you are not. That is the numbers racket. That’s something for the mafia, not for the Christians.

It doesn’t make any difference how large the church income is as to whether you’re accomplishing God’s work or not. All you need is to pay your bills. It doesn’t matter what your prestige is as a church in the community, or what people think of you as a church in the community. Whether you’re a friendly or an unfriendly church. Whether you’re good-looking or not as a congregation. That might be a relief to you to know. It doesn’t even matter what kind of a personality the pastor as, and I know that will be a great relief to you to know. It doesn’t matter.

In seminary they teach you the certain types of personalities that are suited for the ministry. Other types of personalities are not.

I had a seminary wife that once told me, “When I first saw you I thought of you more as a gambler than a preacher.” Once in a while my friend Buddy Rouch tells me I remind me of Lucky Luciano. Anyhow, there are not these personality types (that are suited for the ministry). This is again an inanity that the world has imposed upon Christians. All of this is irrelevant. It’s relevant to the church members sometimes but it is irrelevant to God. It’s not related to the true performance of a pastor-teacher.

A pastor-teacher’s work fails only when those who attend church cannot over a period of time build a structure of spiritual maturity in their souls. If that’s true and you find that the kids are growing up and they can’t come to a stabilized strong Christian expression of life… Now maybe they don’t because of their own fault and their own choice. But if they couldn’t even if they attended church, then that’s a fantastic failure. This is what most churches crank out. Don’t kid yourself. They crank out exactly nothing.

One of our young women the other day was asked, “What did you think the first time you walked into Berean to church, and here you saw this gymnasium and people meeting in a gym?” She said, “I thought it was neat because I was filled up to here with garbage in the churches with the nice auditoriums and the nice pews and the cushioned bottoms.” If you can’t sit in church and build a structure of spiritual maturity, somebody is conning you, and the pastor-teacher is not functioning. He may entertain you and he may inspire you for the moment, but he’s not doing his job. How many people are sitting there and how much income is coming in, and how much work there is to be done around the property is relevant to you if you are foolish enough to think like that, but it is not relevant to God to the functioning of the ministry.

This word “pleroo” is used in some interesting ways in Scripture that maybe we ought to look at here for just a minute. In Luke 2:40 this same word, to fill up, this word for filling, is used of the Lord Jesus Christ. “And the child grew.” This is the only verse we have about the childhood of Jesus in the Bible. “And the child grew and became strong in spirit filled up (“pleroo”) with wisdom and the grace of God was upon Him.” Do you know what this verse is saying? This verse is saying that the boy Jesus Christ had to build up a spiritual maturity structure in His soul. Isn’t that interesting? Here He was God, but as man He had to build spiritual maturity. As a child He was being given information so that He could build that kind of maturity.

When He was 12 years old He got to the temple and He began speaking to the doctors and the rabbis and the official religious leaders and they were just amazed at what this kid knew. They couldn’t believe the spiritual discernment they found in this child because He had developed spiritual maturity as a result of the Word that had been taught Him.

In Ephesians 1:23, 3:19, 4:10 and Colossians 1:9 that we’ve already looked at you again have this word used, and again it means spiritual maturity structure. Ephesians 5:18 says, “Be not drunk with wine which is excess but be filled (here you have the word again) with the spirit.” Here’s a believer who’s controlled by the Holy Spirit. So he’s coming to spiritual maturity. Colossians 1:25 uses the word “pleroo.” Colossians 1:25 says, “Of which I am made a minister according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you to fulfill the Word of God. Here the pastor-teacher is meeting the congregation’s spiritual need, their spiritual deficiency in the church age. With what? The Word of God. Something needs to be filled in you and it’s done with the Word of God. 1 John 1:4, John 16:24, 17:13 again use that word, and there it uses it in reference to inner happiness.

So let’s look at Ephesians 4:11. Who are these men that God gives by which this job is to be done? In Ephesians 4:11 we read, “And He gave some apostles and some prophets and some pastor-teachers.” “He gave:” From the point of the ascension of Jesus Christ. “He gave” is listed here in a specific way that indicates that He gave on the one hand apostles, prophets, evangelist’s, and then it comes to pastors and teachers, and this in the Greek is different because the two words are combines. This shows that there are four groups of men here and the last one has a double name.

What did God do? Well before the Scriptures were given, from Pentecost to the year 96 AD when the apostle John died and the Scriptures were completed, the local church was being formed. We had apostles, we had prophets, we had evangelists, and we had pastor-teachers. After 96 AD the New Testament Scriptures were written. The apostles and the prophets ceased to operate. An apostle was a gift of great authority in the original local church. It is not a missionary. It doesn’t mean “a sent one” in that sense. It is a gift which was used for the production of the New Testament Scriptures and to establish the initial local churches. We do not have apostles today. The gift of prophecy was active to deliver the mind and the message of God until the Scriptures were written. We do not have the gift of prophecy today.

The evangelist and the pastor-teacher gifts we do have today. Here is the ability on the part of an evangelist to deal with the doctrine of salvation in an especially gifted way. If an evangelist tries to be the pastor of a church he is out of the will of God. If his primary gift is to be an evangelist, he cannot function as a pastor-teacher, and the church suffers terrible under his ministry though he often has great numerical success when he does that. The local assembly is for communicating doctrine to Christians, not for evangelizing unbelievers. So the evangelist teaches the gospel information. He does this with authority but he does not have authority in the local church.

Now the pastor-teacher however is a different story. The word “pastor” means “shepherd” and this has to do with authority of his office. He is to have a stick which has a hook on the end which is designed for pulling the sheep from danger and to protect them against their own negative volition and to protect them against pirates.

One of the things I’ve discovered is if you have a church where people are taught the Word of god and they build spiritual maturity, they become such functioning Christians that you become the object of pirates. We are forever having groups that are outside of the local assembly who are passing an envious eye upon believers who are on the job for the Lord because they have been trained in the Word of God. These groups are eager to draw the capacities of those working productive believers into some operation of their own which they’re sponsoring. It’s the pastor’s job to keep an eye out for the flock that they are not drawn off to dissipation beyond that which is the Lord’s plan for that assembly.

Now this requires some authority in the pastor. It requires knowledge. It requires training. He is not the congregation’s football therefore. He is not the patsy. He is not the congregation’s employee. And he’s not everybody’s doormat. If he permits himself to be that, he is violating the gift which God has given him in the ministry to which God has called him. Make no mistake that the congregation will readily all of these things to the pastor-teacher if he’ll tolerate it. The pastor is responsible to God and to God alone for that flock, for what happens to it, and to God he will give an accounting. He is not responsible to his boards. Therefore, since the congregation can remove the pastor at any time, he is an authority until they do so. While he is in office, he carries top authority within that congregation.

Now the other word that goes with “pastor” is “teacher.” in the Greek, making it a combined office, the pastor-teacher. He is one who communicates as a teacher to a group of priests gathered together. He does this publicly so that they may sit in a group, listen to the Word, and every Christian can act as his own priest, and in the privacy of his own heart he can make decisions and exercise his own volition.

The primary function of the pastor-teacher is very aptly summed up for us in the book of Acts. In the 6th chapter beginning at verse 4: “But we will give ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.” This is the whole duty of the pastor-teacher. Praying on behalf of the work and behalf of the believers and giving himself to the hard demanding task of study of the Word in order that he may be prepared to stand up before the flock and to feed them in-depth and with substance.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971