

God Speaks to the Pastor

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Red lights are flashing! The car pulls over. The officer takes him to the station. He is officially charged and later convicted of drunkenness. He is a WELS pastor.

"You can only accept a call in this immediate area, otherwise I'll lose my job, my pension and . ." she said. A WELS pastor does not accept a call to another state, because, she said

"The Lord has given me a family to care for and that includes regular babysitting when my wife goes to work", said a WELS home missionary.

"I don't believe I'll be back to the Seminary because it is evident that my wife would not be a benefit to the Lord's work as a pastor's wife", a former student replied.

"The Lord would not want us to be unhappy and thus do a poor job in serving Him," as a call is declined to another congregation offering a lower salary.

"If our Day School Teachers during the year average about 45 hours of work a week, why should more be expected of the pastor", a WELS pastor grumbled.

"Why should I do all that "mickey mouse" stuff. I'm here to equip the saints so they can do it", the WELS pastor said, as he tried to excuse himself for not having a weekly bulletin in his congregation.

Recently it was said that some fourteen pastors had resigned from the ministry during a very short period of time within our Synod.

These are but some examples to indicate that things may be changing in our midst with the attitude, outlook, motivation, and dedication of the WELS pastoral ministry. I don't know what the statistics would show if taken today and compared with those of yesteryear, recognizing the total number of pastors then and now. But we would have to admit, that seemingly there are more problems that are of greater common knowledge to the ministry and laymen than before. It was because of these problems that this paper was assigned.

I would like to divide the matter of, GOD SPEAKS TO THE PASTOR, into three parts; God speaks to the pastor I. as an individual, II. according to 1. Tim. and Titus, and III. according to the gospel of Mark.

I. God speaks to the pastor, as an individual

God does not speak to us as He did in times past to the prophets and apostles. However, He does speak. His Word is full of His directives.

Each pastor is an, individual human being. As such he falls under every God-given indictment of natural man. He is a sinner, lost and condemned. One who was conceived and born in sin. One who deserves death, temporal and eternal. He is one who was born with hatred and enmity against God and all that God stands for. He is filled with every evil that comes automatically out of his own sinful nature. He is a self-righteous, arrogant fool, who seeks and is constantly striving to gain the good will of God through his own work, person and effort. It is to this individual that God says, "The wages of sin is death." "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." "No one does good, no not one." It is imperative that every pastor not only know this but readily confess it, and thus join the publican who could merely smite his breast and say, "Be merciful to me a sinner." However, God has more to say to this individual with his problems that deserve everlasting grief.

"Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. (Is. 1:18). "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16). He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them, and was raised again," (2 Cor. 5:15). "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you," (Mt. 28:19) "Because I live, you also will live." (John 14:19). "Serve the Lord with gladness. . .give thanks to Him and praise His name. For the Lord is

good and His love endures forever." (Ps:100:2,4,5). In Christ the problems of sin, death, and damnation have been destroyed, removed. This human being that is the pastor has been led like every child of God to the realization of what a wonderful gift God has graciously bestowed on him, perhaps to an even deeper realization than the average person. He has been given a faith that receives this joyous message and consequently finds that he is filled with joy, thankfulness, and a desire to please his loving Redeemer who at such great cost has freely provided eternal life for him. Thus with the love of Christ compelling him, he finds that service in a full-time capacity is something appealing, something he desires.

God speaks to the pastor as an individual, as a sinner who has been redeemed and brought to faith; one who has been led to want to thank and to praise his dear Lord Jesus with full-time service; one who desires to become a pastor.

To that end God sees to his training through parents, teachers, pastors, professors, and others. During this training he comes into contact with other things that God has to say to him as a pastor.

II God speaks to the pastor according to 1 Tim. 3 and Titus 1.

In 1 Tim. 3 and also in the first chapter of Titus, God speaks to the pastor most directly concerning the qualifications of a pastor and the example he is to set. All of the things God mentions to a pastor, He also speaks to every child of His, with but two exceptions. One is the qualification that he be able to teach; the other is not being a novice to Christianity. Though the majority of qualifications apply to all believers, nevertheless, they are mentioned here to indicate that the pastor especially, is to exemplify them. Paul mentions this in a number of places. In 1 Tim. 4:12 and 1 Pet. 5:3 he speaks of the pastor as an "example to the flock"; "a model to follow" in 2 Thess. 3:9. In a pastor God expects his qualifications to become more vivid, deeply imbedded, and firmly fixed as daily examples to all.

Let's review what God says to the pastor according to 1 Tim. 3 and Titus 1. We will begin with 1 Tim. 3 and then pick up those items mentioned in Titus that were not listed in 1 Tim.

ἀσεπιλημπτον

- "above reproach" (translations in quotation marks are from the NIV) from α and ἐπιλαμβάνω. One against whom no one can fasten reproach or blame; one against whom "no charge of a grave moral offense can be sustained." The pastor is to be one who will not have committed something to which critics can grab hold. He is, to be irreproachable, irreprehensible. Even so, there will be those things that will arise, that should not, but are such that will not bring general disdain on the part of the people. Similar to this word (in Titus) is,

ἀνεγκλήτος

- "blameless", from α and ἐγκαλέω. The pastor is one who will not be accused, one against whom judicial proceedings will not be instituted. Charges will not be brought against him. In both of these instances it is evident that the pastor is to set a very exemplary life, free from that which people may point to and cast blame.

μῑς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα

- "husband of but one wife". During Paul's time the practice of having more than one "wife" was prevalent. The pastor is to have one mate. This doesn't mean that he cannot remarry when he becomes a widower. Today there are some cults and sects that may practice having more than one wife, but this is not the norm for our society. However, even if society changes in this regard, it will not change this directive of God.

In this regard it might be a good opportunity to mention a few things about what is not said by God in regard to the wife. The pastor is to be the husband of one wife, period! Not the husband of a female pastor; nor

one who has been called to be the leader next to her husband. She has the privilege of being wife and mother. Certainly she may be able, and wish, as a child of God, to do more things within His Kingdom according to the ability she has and the time that is available to her from her first and foremost duties as a woman; as wife and mother. What about outside the home and church? Should she work outside of them in the business world of today? Again, there will be times when this may very well be good and necessary, but not at the expense of the total work of her pastor husband. To make him the babysitter and therefore hinder him in doing his studying, making of calls or being available for the emergency that might arise is to detract from the total work that has been entrusted to the pastor by his Savior. To go to work in order that the pastor's home and style of life may be above that of the people can very easily lead to materialism that only leads away from the Savior and His work, rather than to augment and to efficiently promote it.

νηφάλιον

- "temperate". The pastor is to be one who is vigilant in all things. Keeping an eye open for anything that might be detrimental to himself, his family, or his congregation. He is to be circumspect in all he does and says, that no blame may be placed on his person, his congregation, or his Lord. He is to be well balanced, having emotions and impulses under control.

σώφρονα

- "self-controlled". The idea here is that the pastor be thoughtful and prudent. One who is sensible and reasonable, having a sound mind and using it, as he evaluates the countless situations into which he finds himself as a pastor. A matter of using the mind rather than the emotions. One who doesn't have to have his "own way". There will be many times when the people will look to their pastor for advice when it comes to the administration of the church, dealing with the souls of men, and what is best for the congregation. However, to think that everything must have the stamp of approval of the pastor is an error. God has given many within the Christian church gifts that, in some instances, are far better than those of the pastor when it comes to the outward coming and goings of the local congregation. Let those gifts and God-given abilities flourish. This may even be done; at times, when the pastor knows from personal experience that it is not the best way of doing something. Control is a vital part of the pastor's makeup. Hair-brained ideas, frivolity, and shallowness of thought are not the things that enhance a pastor's ministry, but detract from it and may well lead away from the real message the pastor has to offer from the Word.

κόσμιον

- "respectable". The pastor is to be respectable in regard to actions and words. The root word is used of women in regard to modest apparel, which should indicate that when used in regard to a pastor, he, too, in actions, dress, words, and personal traits would do well to meet that which is the norm of the majority; leaning neither too far toward either extreme. In this regard we don't need to have a hair style, either on the head or the face, that is frowned upon by many in the congregation. - Dressing the part of the rancher may be offensive to the rancher who needs to wear the boots in the line of his work. - While the use of tobacco is on the wane it might be well to think of the smell on the breath, fingers and clothes, and what effect it has on those he deals with. - Using colloquial speech may at times be effective but it also can become a very boring thing to those within the congregation that know there is a better way.

- φιλόξενον
- "hospitable". He is to be kind to strangers. A pastor is one who extends the hand of care and concern, in a ready and cheerful manner. One who enjoys the opportunity to be a friend, knowing full well that in so doing he is befriending his Savior. People will soon note any signs of inhospitality or stand-offishness. The people of this world very often are much more hospitable than those within the parsonage. There should be no such thing as rudeness, impoliteness or hesitancy to be hospitable at each and every occasion.
- διδασκτικόν
- "able to teach". The pastor is to have skill in teaching. Usually this is a gift that has to be developed. One that is over and above that which is found in the non-trained. The pastor is one who has attained skill in presenting the truths so the hearer may better be able to comprehend the truths of God's grace in Christ Jesus. He is to equip the saints so the Lord's work may go on through their efforts. In order to do this the pastor must also be equipped, equipped to teach. We don't find the same ability in all pastors, nor do we expect it; but the ability to teach is absolutely necessary, for that is the name of the "game" when it comes to the ministry.
- μη πάροιον
- "not given to much wine". The pastor is neither to be an addict of alcoholic beverages or one who is eager to get that drink. He is one who by his actions, both in public and in private, serves notice that there is a line of propriety and good taste that will not be crossed, in order that there will not be a basis for any whispered words indicating abuse; There are any number of instances when abstinence is the action the pastor, will take. I do recall when, an invitation to join a fellow pastor for dinner also included the request to pick up some "mimeo ink" because the telephone operator was a member of his congregation and had a propensity for listening in, but when that same message was repeated time and time again even the casual listener will soon become the wise listener.
- μη πλήκτην
- "not violent". A pastor is the emissary of Him who brought peace. He is the messenger of peace. There is nothing more incongruous than to have him, who is to be a representative of the Peace Bringer to be a violent man. He should be one of gentleness in actions, thoughts and words. This should be the case within the parsonage and the church; with those of family and friend as well as with those obnoxious and stubborn within the congregation that try the patience. The pastor will always remember that violence causes loss; loss of respect, loss of being believable, loss of people's attention to the truth he has to present to them for their spiritual health.
- ἀλλὰ ἐπεικῆ
- "but gentle". One who is yielding. One who is kind. One who is a picture of the Lord Jesus; who with a look of sorrow saw Peter who had denied Him three times; who with gentleness asked three times, "Lovest thou me?"
- ἄμαχον
- "not quarrelsome". A pastor is not one who is looked upon as someone who seemingly is hard to get along with. Whether with individuals or the council or the voters assembly he should be found to be one with whom you can work, plan and go forward in the work that is to be done. He is to have the attitude and disposition of one who makes every effort to see the

other point of view and will, to the extent humanly possible, give credit and follow the suggestions and approach of others.

σφιλάργυρον

- "Not a lover of money". A pastor is not to be greedy or even give the appearance of greed. He is one who recognizes money for what it is; a means by which he can carry out God's advice concerning the care of his family, government and church. One who doesn't think in terms of being short-changed by his salary when compared to the salary of another. One who has learned to trust in the Lord who knows his every hair and to whom he prays with assurance, "give us THIS DAY our daily bread." Here, perhaps more than most places, the pastor will do well to remember not to become a part of this world. I don't agree with one of the fathers that we are to steer away from such things as investments, stocks, bonds, etc. Such things may become a tool that cultivates our Old Adam's greed, then avoid. However, in this day and age they may be tools of good stewardship with the resources that God gives us.

τοῦ ἰδίου καλῶς προϊστάμενον

- "He must manage his own family well". The pastor as husband and father is the head of his family. He is to exercise that headship well, ruling and directing it so that all may be of benefit to the members of the family, including himself, and to the whole work of the ministry. He is especially

τέκνα ἔχοντα ἐν ὑποταγῇ μετὰ πασης σεμνότητος - "see that his children obey him with proper respect."

On this same matter in Titus we find the following:

τέκνα ἔχων πιστά

- "whose children believe". This in turn is amplified with

μὴ ἐν κατηγορίᾳ ἀσωτίας ἢ ἀνοπίτακτα - "not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient". When it comes to the matter of the pastor's family and children much will be revealed to those who observe. He is to have the proper respect of his children which most often is evidenced in the way obedience and deference is extended to their father. His are to be believing children who are trustworthy, both in relation to their father as well as to the words of their Lord. They will not be charged or accused of being ἀσωτίας "wild". Here, wild includes debauchery and profligacy. They are not to fall under the condemnation of being, ἀνοπίτακτα, "disobedient". His children are not to be rebellious or undisciplined.

μὴ νεόφυτον

- "not a recent convert". He is not to be one who has been recently planted in the Christian Church, a new convert to Christianity. Why? Lest he become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the Devil who rebelled against his Master and thought more of himself than he had a right, and thus tried to place on himself what rightly could only be given to God, His honor, praise and glory.

μαρτυρίαν λαλήν ἔχειν

- "a good reputation". He is to have a good standing with those in the congregation but also within the community; one who receives good testimony from the neighbor, police, businesses and leaders of the community.

μὴ αὐθάδη

- "not overbearing" Self willed, stubborn and arrogant are not adjectives that are to be attached to the pastor. One who is always pushing for his way

- and his way only, brings discord and disharmony to the flock and causes vibrations that will eventually destroy.
- μη ὀργίλου - "not quick tempered". Inclined to anger is not a characteristic of a pastor. Very often the pastor is placed in a defensive posture when questioned about his work or person. Instead of anger a better approach is an analytical examination of self.
- μη αἰσχροκαρδῆ - "not pursuing dishonest gain". The pastor is not one who is fond of dishonest gain in any form, especially when it comes to money. It can be understating salary or overstating travel allowance. It may be a few cents for a stamp or something left over from a building program that is personalized. The pastor has no need of any of it.
- φιλάγαθον - "loves what is good". One who finds joy in that which is good and beneficial both in the eyes of man and of God. One who, because of God's love, seeks out good rather than that which titilates the Old Adam.
- δίκαιον - "upright". The pastor will be found to be just and righteous; one conforming to both the laws of God and of man and living in accordance with them.
- ὅσιου - "holy". The pastor's deportment, thinking and attitude will be pleasing to God. He will be devout and pious as he exhibits the light of faith that glows out of a sanctified heart. Salacious looks, words or actions are not a robe for the pastor.
- ἀνεχόμενον τοῦ κατὰ τὴν διδαχὴν πιστοῦ λόγου - "He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught". The pastor will be convinced of the truth of God's Word so that he will want to know it and be able to expound it for the encouragement of some and to refute those who oppose sound doctrine. In order for this to be done he will regularly work in that Word that it might strengthen and equip him for the work of being a faithful pastor.

To the above, additional, thoughts and amplifications can be garnered from direct statements Jesus made to His disciples in the Gospels. We continue to note how God speaks to the pastor.

III. God speaks to the pastor according to the Gospel of Mark.

"Come, follow Me" (Mark 1:17) Jesus said to Simon and Andrew; to Levi, "Follow me." (Mark 2:14) To pastors the Savior has also said, follow Me. We are not blazing a trail, we are following one already blazed. We don't have to look for something new, something different. We are followers of Him Who has found the way and victoriously conquered every mountain, canyon and roaring river that stood in the way. He is the only way to success. He asks that we follow His guidance personally and then entrusts us to be His assistants in pointing others to the way he has already traversed. There is nothing better than to be called by the Savior and asked to follow. That privilege belongs to every pastor. Let him rejoice in the privilege and the journey.

"Consider carefully what you hear", He continued, "with the measure you use, it will be measured to you - and even more. Whoever has will be given more, whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him". (Mark 4:24,25). How eagerly the pastor will want to hear what the Savior has to say. With much attention he will listen to Him speak. With an even fuller measure will Jesus return to the pastor precious truths for his life and that of his people. Those pastors who have a lack of interest or a mere formal and outward attention to Jesus' words will soon find that they have less than when they started. Continued apathy in this direction will lead to total loss.

"Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" (Mark 4:40). It was a terrific storm. The disciples were afraid. Jesus looked for a stronger faith. The problems are immense, the tasks unending, and the results are

disappointing at times for every pastor. Personal ineptitude, congregational indifference and family tragedy can threaten to bring fear to the strongest of pastors. But should it be? He who made the sea quiet still is the One who has called the pastor, is ever present with the pastor, and will let nothing, even drowning, as it were, in the sea of responsibility and care, be of harm to his eternal benefit. Trust that Savior that you are in the best place at the right time, to serve in the best way. pastor, remember, He has redeemed you. You are His. He will not forsake His own.

"Take nothing for the journey except a staff - no bread, no bag, no money in your belts, Wear sandals but not an extra tunic." (Mark 6:8,9). Jesus gives. Jesus provides.. Depend on Him. So Jesus trained His disciples. What a tremendous advantage the Christian pastor has when his reliance is fastened on the Lord. No matter if there is an abundance or if there is very little or nothing, to realize that one is totally dependent on the Lord brings both comfort and courage. He who has called the pastor and Who sends him out will also care for him. Many have experienced this wonderful truth in a multiplicity of ways.

"Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." (Mark 6:31). Jesus recognized the need for physical rest. He and His disciples needed it in, order to better continue with their tasks. Each pastor has a need for rest. We ought to encourage, it, for in so doing the pastor can better serve. We should also realize that the need for such rest is not needed or desirable for every pastor to the same extent. Some really only need an afternoon, morning or evening to be refreshed for another week. Others need a whole day or even two, in order that they may be able to continue at a hectic rate of 12 hours a day. pastors need to understand that the needs will vary from time to time and from one person to another. pastors will realize that such rest and recreation is there to restore to the body and mind new vigor to carry out the work at hand. Obviously, this area can be misused, as can anything that God has given us. Regular examination of one's practice is a wise thing for every pastor.

"You give them something to eat". (Mark 6:37), Jesus was concerned for the physical, well-being of 5000 people, He asked His disciples to do some serving that was neither glamorous or thrilling. So with every pastor. There are times when he will be in a situation to serve in a very mundane capacity. He'll neither think evil or grumble when so called upon to serve.

"Be careful. Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod." (Mark 8:15). The yeast of which Jesus spoke was the insidious belief that self-holiness self-righteousness, was the way to God. *μετάνοια* and *πίστις* are thus abolished. So, too, the pastor's Old Adam and Satan strives to work in him a form of self-righteousness based on his efforts and example. Humble repentance and simple reliance on the Savior is soon lost. Truly, it is a warning for every follower of Christ for all times.

"Who do you say I am?" (Mark 8:29). Christ no longer asks us face to face as He did Peter and the other disciples. But there is no limit to the times this confession "You are the Christ" will be made by the pastor. When remaining faithful to His Word against false doctrine, false teachers, a false heart that would excuse sin in himself or in those of some position within the congregation; when determining the position to take with the local ministerial association; this confession will be made by the faithful pastor.

"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." (Mark 8:34). Jesus doesn't drag anyone after Himself. In His Kingdom there are none but volunteers who are more than ready to follow after that victorious leader Who has given them the gift of eternal life. With His grace he has changed the will of His pastors and thus won them to and for Himself. Now they are more than ready to turn off, to disown and to refuse companionship with the one who is called Ego. So the pastor's life is one where self is cast out and Christ enters. Life then becomes a living for Christ. It means bearing the cross of Christ, rejection, mockery, hurt, lies, that Christ bore. There is nothing especially appealing in following Christ's earthly path. The journey is hard and long and full of pain, anguish, and disappointment. But it's the end of the journey that brings all into proper perspective; being with our Brother and all others of His family, for eternity.

"If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all". (Mark 9:35). How often does it not happen that the Old Adam seeks the glory of men through man's idea of greatness, his position of honor and rank? The pastor will daily drown his Old Adam and ever keep in mind that being last in the

Kingdom is to be greatest of all. The more humble and the more, willing a pastor serves, the higher he will stand in the economy of God. The pastor will humbly, without a thought of reward, do the work entrusted to his care. Faithfully ministering, not a shadow watcher intent on the good form or example he is making, the pastor, without guile, serves his greatest love, Jesus. To this goal all pastors can strive and achieve by the grace given in Christ. So it is not a matter of being president or professor; board member or conference secretary; parish pastor or associate thereto; executive secretary or secretary to the executive that determines greatness, but the service that is faithfully being performed day in and day out in the sphere in which the Savior has placed His servant and willing slave. The greater the greatness the less it is realized by the one who has it.

"Have faith in God. I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours". (Mark 11:22,25) pastor, trust your Lord! Believe Him! Take Him at His Word!, The Lord will give! He will hear! Pray! How weak pastors are at times. They look to the world for answers. They look to themselves for strength. They look to the writings and philosophy of men for guidance and the depression increases, the fear pervades and the work comes to a grinding halt. pastor, pray, believe, succeed with the success that God wants and alone can give.

"Watch" (Mark 13:37). To everyone, to every pastor, the Lord says, "Watch". Why? Because no one knows the day or the hour when the Son of man will come in the clouds with great power and glory to judge each person without exception. To every pastor the Lord is saying, "Be on guard! Be alert!" Don't be sleeping. The pastor will recognize that the work to be done must be done before this coming of the Lord. The pastor will give constant reminders to his family and congregation to do the work while it is day, to be alert to everything and everyone who would cause forgetfulness and carelessness toward that which is coming.

"Take it; this is My body."....."This is My blood"(Mark 22:24). What a wonderful and loving Lord that He should remember His own with such a beautiful and yet functional gift. Through His Supper He seals to each believing heart the forgiveness of sins through His body and blood. pastors will never forget or let the matter of Holy Communion become a "ho-hum" commonplace occurrence; a mere habit to be indulged in at some regular interval. For himself and for his people the pastor will recognize the preciousness of this gift and the blessings that are extended through it.

"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." (Mark 14:38). How true! How bitterly true! Every child of God has had to acknowledge this fact no less those who are pastors.

In love the Lord will point the direction and give gentle words of warning. But, alas, we don't listen and we go our own way to find, that with Peter and the others, we both fall asleep and run away from the very One Who loves us the most, from Him Whom we wish to serve the most. As watchmen, let the pastors be awake and watching. Let him spend much time on his knees in prayer as he would promote the life of his Mew Man and continue to drown his Old Adam in contrition and repentance.

"Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation (Mark 16:15). "Go" and "preach". This is the exciting work of the pastor. This is what the ministry is all about, "preach the good news to all creation". The Lord has told the pastors many things. All is there to help the pastor better fulfill his purpose, proclaiming the message of salvation; telling people they have a Savior from sin, there is peace with God, they can be certain of going to heaven, all in the person of Jesus.

How will it all be done? God doesn't expect miracles. He isn't looking for perfection. He doesn't always look for great oratory, tremendous personality and scintillating actions that draw the undrawable into the courtyard of heaven. But the Savior does expect each pastor to be faithful as stated in 1 Cor. 4:2, "Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful". To each pastor He has given various gifts and talents in varying degrees. To each pastor He has given an area of responsibility. From each pastor He expects but one thing, faithfulness. Faithfulness to Him and His Word. Faithfulness with the abilities he has. Faithfulness to those entrusted to his care within both family and congregation. Faithfulness in relaying His Word of wrath and of comfort.

Our Lord has many things to say to the pastor; things that deal with his person, his office, his family, his congregation and his community. The Lord has given many directives to the pastor. As we look at them we are

overwhelmed. As we compare them with our lives, shame floods over us. But when we look to Him Who is our Lord we are filled with love, with joy; we are moved to thank and praise; with feet of clay; we are made bold and strong, to attempt the impossible, and the impossible becomes possible. The Word of grace is proclaimed. Hearts are changed. Souls are added to the roll of life. Not because of us but through the Word entrusted to us the Lord's work is done according to His good pleasure. The Lord gives a trust to each pastor. A tremendous privilege with an awesome responsibility. With this trust, however, He also gives the courage, willingness and strength to perform it. Rejoice, pastor, in the position to serve Jesus, the One whom you love above all.

God does speak to the pastor at every turn. When the pastor's Old Adam leads him to think and feel he is a notch better than others, God says, you are a sinner in whom there is no good. - When the pastor is faced with his many sins of incompetence, uncertainty, doubt, laziness, arrogance, pride and all others, God says, in my Son there is forgiveness and peace. - When the pastor has problems with his family and nothing seems to be going right; no communication with his wife; the children are not obedient, God says, love her as Christ loved the church, let the children come unto me. - When the work of the ministry seems to be a losing battle that only brings discouragement and despair, God says I am with you until the end of time. - When the grass of the world begins to look greener than, the yard of the Lord, God says, I am leading you too that pasture where there is perfect abundance with contentment forever.

Wherever the pastor, whoever he may be, the Lord has something to say. In each and every case He speaks out of a heart of grace that wants only the very best for those whom He bought with His holy precious blood and innocent suffering and death Pastor, listen! Lord, make it so!