

# **Marks of a Good Pastor – Part 1**

Sunday Morning – 02/11/2018  
Sleater Kinney Road Baptist Church, Olympia, WA

## **INTRODUCTION:**

- I have a very simple goal in these two sermons – I want to walk through 2 Timothy 1-2, and explain some marks of a good pastor
  - o When the idea of “pastoral qualifications” comes up, most Christians instinctively think of 1 Timothy 3 or Titus 1
- For a quick review, here are some qualifications from those two passages:

	<b>1 Timothy 3:1-7</b>	<b>Titus 1:6-9</b>
Above reproach	X	X
Husband of one wife	X	X
Sober-minded	X	
Self-controlled	X	X
Respectable	X	
Hospitable	X	X
Able to teach	X	
Not a drunkard	X	X
Not violent but gentle	X	X
Not quarrelsome	X	
Not a lover of money	X	X
Manage his household well	X	
Keep children submissive with all dignity	X	
Not a recent convert	X	
Well thought of by outsiders	X	
Children have good conduct		X
Not arrogant		X
Not quick-tempered		X
A lover of good		X
Upright		X
Holy		X
Disciplined		X
Hold firm to the Word		X

- This little series will be different, because we’re not dealing with either of those passages

## **TEXT:**

***Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life which is in Christ Jesus: To Timothy, my***

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### ***beloved child - grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord (2 Tim 1:1-2)***

- There's several things that should be very obvious here, right up front:
  - o (1) Paul has authority from God ("by the will of God"), so you and I need to listen to what He says
  - o (2) Timothy has a very special place in his heart
- This is the last letter Paul wrote before he was killed; he didn't die at the end of the Book of Acts:
  - o (1) he was apparently released,
  - o (2) ministered for a handful of years,
  - o (3) may have even reached Spain with the Gospel,
  - o (4) was arrested at some point later (perhaps in Troas; 2 Tim 4:13),
  - o (5) and died under Emperor Nero
    - He was in prison in Rome for the *second time* when he wrote this letter
- He knew he was about to be executed (2 Tim 4:6ff)
  - o He'd been abandoned by some of his students/friends (2 Tim 4:9f), and wanted company before he died
  - o He was cold ("bring the cloak," 2 Tim 4:13), alone, and had nothing to read
- In this context, he wrote this letter to Timothy, to give him some last, desperate and important advice about how to carry on without him
  - o That means we ought to listen to what Paul says about the qualities of a good pastor and leader of a congregation

#### **1. A Leader, not a Coward:**

***I thank God whom I serve with a clear conscience, as did my fathers, when I remember you constantly in my prayers. As I remember your tears, I long night and day to see you, that I may be filled with joy.***

***I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you. Hence I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that***

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***is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control (2 Tim 1:3-7).***

- Paul tells Timothy something very important, and it's so obvious, and so clear that we sometimes take it for granted – ***a pastor must be a leader.***
  - (1) Paul remembers Timothy's faith, and thanks God for it
  - (2) Paul reminds Timothy about how his mother and grandmother were instrumental in his own salvation
  - (3) Then, Paul reminds Timothy to "rekindle" the pastoral gifts he had, which God had given him through the Holy Spirit
    - Don't be depressed
    - Don't despair
    - Don't give up your fight for the Gospel
    - Don't give in to laziness
    - Let your love of Christ and His Gospel burst into "flames" of enthusiasm, and serve the Lord with passion!
  - (4) Why was this reminder even necessary?
    - Because it's natural for a guy to become timid,
    - to slink back,
    - to tuck his head into his shell like a timid little turtle,
    - to start treading lightly as the storm clouds of persecution began to crash out against Christians in the Roman Empire
    - Remember the apostles immediately after Jesus' execution!
  - (5) God didn't give us a spirit of timidity, of cowardice, of fearful fright
    - (a) He gave us power
      - The power of the Spirit, to aid us when we're afraid
      - The power of direct access to the Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord, the captain of our salvation who blazed that trail for us, right through the compartments of tabernacle, past that torn and obsolete curtain, right to the very throne of grace
    - (b) He gave us love:
      - love for one another,
      - love for the Gospel,
      - love for the Father,

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- and love for His eternal Son Jesus Christ,
- and love for the Spirit who gives us spiritual life and draws us to salvation
- **(c)** He also gave us discipline, self-control
  - The self-control to do what's right, no matter what pressures are brought to bear by the Accuser
  - The discipline to lead a congregation to follow and worship the Lord in spirit and truth, no matter what the culture says

***Hence I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control (2 Tim 3:6-7)***

- Let me be as plain as vanilla ice cream right now, and tell you straight-out:
  - **(1)** The next Pastor of this church ***can't be a coward!***
  - **(2)** The next Pastor of this church ***can't be timid!***
  - **(3)** The next Pastor of this church ***can't be afraid to stand for the truth!***
  - **(4)** The next Pastor of this church ***can't be afraid of people, including Christians!***
- These are critical times for Christians, and we need leaders in our churches who:
  - **(1)** care about the Gospel,
  - **(2)** and have the spirit of power,
  - **(3)** and have a love for God
  - **(4)** and the discipline to be fearless, persuasive, winsome and passionate ambassadors for the Good News of Jesus Christ
    - ***You can't do that if you're terrified about what people think about you or the Gospel!***
    - ***If you love God, you'll want to defend Him and proclaim Him to the world!***
- Make no mistake, organizations across this entire land (secular and Christian) are filled with so-called leaders who are cowards
  - You've worked for some in the past
  - You may even work for some right now!

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- You know what I'm talking about
- Christians can be very skilled at spiritualizing incompetence, because we want to be loving and kind
  - (1) A man might not be able to teach his way out of a wet paper bag,
  - (2) might not know Augustine from Anselm,
  - (3) might have a spine as stiff as a soggy spaghetti noodle,
  - (4) but if he's a nice guy who loves the Lord, some congregations are willing to make him their Pastor
    - **Don't do it** – a Pastor can't be a coward, not with the pressures and challenges he faces every day
    - **He must be a leader!**
- That's exactly what Paul turns to next:

***Do not be ashamed then of testifying to our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel in the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of our works but in virtue of his own purpose and the grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago, and now has manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.***

***For this gospel I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, and therefore I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me (2 Tim 1:8-12)***

- Folks, the next Pastor of this church can't be a wilting flower of a guy
  - He must be mentally tough
  - He needs to be willing to never be ashamed of the Gospel, and its implications for every single facet of your life
- The Christian life is a worldview, an inter-related network of beliefs and convictions that combine together to inform how we view this world – **the**

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*Christian faith is a picture and story that interprets reality; that explains “the way things are.”<sup>1</sup>*

- (1) **Creation:** how did we get here?
  - (2) **Fall:** why are things the way they are? Why do bad things happen?
  - (3) **Redemption:** how can this be fixed? How can things be set right?
  - (4) **Restoration:** will things ever be fixed?
- Every worldview, every religion (yes, atheism and scientific naturalism is a religion; I’m also tempted to believe politics are a religion for some people, too! 😊):
    - (1) has a set of beliefs that seek to explain these four, most basic concepts and, together,
    - (2) they form the skeleton that you use to interpret and understand the world around you
  - The Gospel of Jesus Christ answers each of these four “big questions” in a way no others can (because it’s the only truth 😊), and this message has implications that should echo and reverberate throughout *every nook, cranny, corner and closet of your life*
    - (1) If we don’t have a leader who is willing to understand that,
    - (2) and can’t lead us individually and corporately to impact our community, friends, family, neighbors, co-workers and enemies with this picture of reality (the only true picture of reality),
    - (3) then he’s not fit to be a leader of a Christian church
  - The Pastor must be a leader – his job is too important!

## **2. The Pastor Must Follow the Bible:**

***Follow the pattern of the sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus (2 Tim 1:13)***

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<sup>1</sup> These days, there are plenty of books which discuss the idea of a Christian worldview. One of the most helpful, I believe, is Gregory Koukl’s book *The Story of Reality: How the World Began, How it Ends, and Everything Important that Happens in Between* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017). His book is really a description of the Christian “story” for seekers; that is, unbelievers who are interested in finding out what Christianity is about. It’s a wonderful book to give to someone who fits this description.

My description of the Christian worldview as a “picture” or “story of reality,” along with the four “big questions,” are taken from his book. Again, I’ve heard and read this all before, but Koukl did a masterful job of distilling these concepts here.

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- Paul taught Timothy everything he knows, with a bit of help from his mother and grandmother along the way (☺)!
  - (1) Timothy needs to follow Paul’s example about “sound words”
  - (2) Paul is dead, he didn’t leave any YouTube videos or mp3 recordings behind for us to find, and Nero deleted Paul’s FaceBook page once he had Paul executed
  - (3) This means the only place we’ll find Paul’s words, so we can follow them, is in the preserved Word of God – the Bible
  - (4) The Bible was written by \*\*\* men, over the course of \*\*\* years, and we believe God moved each of those men to record and write exactly what He wanted them to write, then preserved these books (through the thousands of copies and their mass distribution, and the reverence God’s people have always had for them) down through the centuries so we could have them on our laps, phones, or tablets this very morning
- So, as Pastor has to be a guy who’s completely committed to following what the Bible says
  - This might seem obvious, but it isn’t so obvious
  - Just consider the four “big questions” I mentioned earlier; how can you answer any of these questions unless you’re committed to interpreting and following God’s Word, in God’s way?
- (1) **Creation:** how did we get here?
  - (a) Were Adam and Eve real people, or just story figures created by a writer to make a point?
  - (b) Are men and women really the highest of all God’s creations, and made in His image, with all the implications for human dignity, value and worth this implies?
  - (c) Did God actually create the world, or did it somehow come into being out of nothing?
  - (d) Is our world designed by an intelligent Creator, or the product of random chance?
    - There are people who claim to be Christian today who **deny every one of these things**, and some of them even claim to be conservative!
    - If you believe God’s Word speaks today, and is relevant, then you’ll be laughed at by the world – if a man can’t handle that,

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and isn't prepared to have a conversation about why God's right and the scoffers are wrong (more on that in a moment!), then he can't be a Pastor

- (2) **Fall:** why are things the way they are? Why do bad things happen?
  - o (a) does Satan actually exist?
  - o (b) does God have laws, rules, and the power, authority and jurisdiction to hold His creatures accountable for them?
  - o (c) Are men and women really ruined by sin, born as children of wrath who are under the power and control of Satan, whom Paul calls the prince of the power of the air?
  - o (d) hurricanes, floods, famines, tsunamis, murders, rapes, domestic abuse, child abuse, robbery, death itself – is this the way God made the world? Is this what He desires for the world?
    - There are people who call themselves Christians today, who claim to love and follow God's Word, who couldn't answer those questions in a straightforward way
- (3) **Redemption:** how can things be fixed? How can they be set right?
  - o (a) did Jesus actually exist?
    - For over 100 years, some alleged Christians have argued that we don't know who the "real Jesus" actually is<sup>2</sup>
  - o (b) did God really send Jesus to willingly and voluntarily die in our place, as our divine substitute, for God's wrath to be satisfied, to atone and pay for sins, and to reconcile us to Him?
    - Some Christians hate the idea of substitutionary atonement, calling it "divine child sacrifice"
  - o (c) did Jesus really obey God's law perfectly, because we can't?
  - o (d) did Jesus really rise from the dead, to destroy Satan's power over men and women, "**and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage,**" (Heb 2:15)
  - o (e) was He really seen by hundreds of eyewitnesses, and then ascend back to the Father's side in heaven, to intercede and be the eternal advocate and High Priest for everyone who repents and believes in His message of eternal forgiveness, redemption and reconciliation?

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<sup>2</sup> The various quests for the "historical Jesus" are complicated. I commend folks who spend their scholarly careers interacting with these revisionists, but I don't feel the need to offer a "nuanced" view of this controversy here.

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- Some “Christians” believe the miracles in the Bible are just “stories”
- **(4) Restoration:** will things ever be fixed?
  - **(a)** is Jesus coming back to defeat Satan and set things right?
  - **(b)** will there be an eternal state, where Satan is in hell, everything is made new and “good” again, and Father and Son rule and reign together, and there is peace on earth?
  - **(c)** will there be a final judgment, where everyone will stand before Jesus Christ, Lord of Lords, and give an account for whether He’s obeyed or rejected the command to repent and believe the Gospel?
- So, when Paul says “follow the pattern of sound words:”
  - **(1)** he means Timothy has to commit himself to preaching and teaching the same message Jesus taught,
  - **(2)** and Jesus’ message is grounded in the Old Testament and all the precious promises it contains!
- The Pastor can’t be:
  - **(1)** a slave to church traditions that are unbiblical
  - **(2)** an innovator who wants to “update” the Gospel for today’s culture, because we allegedly “know more” than Paul, Peter, John and Jesus did
- Instead, he must be committed to follow the pattern of sound words we find in the Bible:
  - **(1)** a Creation that was made perfect in the beginning, to glorify and honor God;
  - **(2)** the rebellion that ruined everything in the world, including us
  - **(3)** God’s plan to redeem and remake Creation, and to save some of us from ourselves along the way ...
    - by way of His eternal son,
    - who lived a perfect life for us in our place,
    - and willingly died for our sins, in our place, as our substitute,
    - and rose from the dead to defeat Satan and the curses of sin and death
  - **(4)** and the promise that He’s coming back one day ...
    - to defeat all enemies,
    - establish His kingdom,

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- and rule over a new and better creation, and all of us who repent and believe in the Good News will be there with Him, to worship and serve Him for eternity
- The Pastor has to be committed to following the Bible!

### **3. The Pastor Must be an Educated and Capable Man:**

***guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us (2 Tim 1:14)***

- The Bible letters is full of warnings about false teaching:
  - (a) Moses warned against it repeatedly
  - (b) The prophets warned against it over and over
  - (c) John the Baptist fought against
  - (d) Jesus taught against it
  - (e) Paul wrote against it (e.g. Galatians)
  - (f) Peter wrote against it
  - (g) Jude wrote against it
  - (h) Read 1 John!
- There have always been people, from within and without, who have sought to pervert, “transform” and reinterpret the Christian faith into “another Gospel”
  - (a) Syncretism in the Old Testament
  - (b) Legalism and works righteousness in the inter-testamental period until Jesus’ day
  - (c) Pre-gnostic influence in the apostle’s day; folks who denied the resurrection or Jesus’ death, and who believed what was done “in the flesh” had no moral meaning
  - (d) People in the post-apostolic era who believed Jesus was a created being, subordinate to the Father
  - (e) People today who believe Jesus was a normal man, who was somehow “adopted” as Son by the Father
  - (f) Some flavors of Church of Christ teaching, where they believe that water baptism is the agent that regenerates and saves you, along with repentance and faith

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- (g) The Roman Catholic scheme of justification, where God brings you into a state of grace, and gives you the grace to merit and earn good works for yourself, and you have no final assurance of salvation
  - The various flavors of heresy might change, *but the song remain the same* – people will try to pervert the pattern of sound words we find in Scripture
- What does all this have to do with a Pastor? Two implications:
  - (a) he has to be an **educated guy**, and
  - (b) he has to be **capable and competent guy**
    - You expect your doctor to be a competent guy, and you expect him to have formal training to prepare him for his job
    - The same with police officers, accountants, teachers, firemen, pilots, air-traffic controllers, engineers, architects, construction men, administrators in organizations, and in local, state and federal government, etc.
  - We expect both:
    - (1) competence, and
    - (2) an education that prepare these professionals to do their jobs
      - *My own example*
  - You should expect the same thing from a Pastor, or else he can't **“guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us,”** (2 Tim 2:14)
- What, exactly, do I mean by “educated” and “capable,” then?
  - (1) Education:
    - The man must have some kind of formal theological training; a BA from a *respectable institution* was our minimum requirement during our recruitment process
      - A graduate degree would be better
    - Formal education in a professional field isn't *necessarily* about teaching you everything you need to know:
      - (a) it's about providing you a solid foundation to stand on,
      - (b) giving you the tools you need to do your business,
      - (c) and “educating you” about the lay of the land, so you'll be equipped to sharpen those tools and use them for the rest of your professional career

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- This means:
  - (a) you're pushed **hard** to consider points of view you don't like, and
  - (b) you're forced to explain and defend what you believe, and why
- This means:
  - (a) You aren't shocked when you encounter someone who thinks Jesus never actually existed – *you dealt with this at school*
  - (b) You're not stammering when someone tells you we can't trust the Bible, because the NT has been corrupted throughout the years, as copies of manuscripts were transmitted from person to person – *you've seen this before!*
  - (c) You laugh when someone tells you that the Greek text in John 1:1 doesn't teach that Jesus has eternally existed – *you've studied the original languages!*
- An educated Pastor has the foundation and tools:
  - (a) to guard the Gospel,
  - (b) and protect his congregation,
  - (c) and help Christians who might be confused or led astray by some of the heretical madness out there
- (2) Capable:
  - How many of you have known people with degrees who were about as sharp as butter knives, and who were completely incompetent at their jobs?
    - Fact - *some people are promoted beyond their abilities*
    - It doesn't mean they aren't wonderful, nice people – it just means they have no business in that position; it's bad for everybody!
    - Guess what? *The pastorate isn't any different;* a degree doesn't guarantee anything
  - A capable pastor:
    - (a) wants to keep learning more, because he loves God and His Word, and

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- (b) can actually do the job (i.e. teach, preach, counsel, lead, have spiritual discernment, use the tools he gained at university and Seminary, etc.)
- A doctor who graduated from medical school in 1985, and hasn't attended any continuing education seminars since the day he graduated, hasn't cracked open a medical journal, and hasn't kept up with his field is a worthless and unprepared doctor!
  - I actually had a Pastor on my ordination council who boasted that he hadn't read any theological works since he graduated from Bible College in 1975!
- "Capability" means:
  - (a) commitment to continuous learning,
  - (b) and the ability to *actually use the tools* he received at school to become a better Christians and a better Pastor
- Paul told Timothy he had to "guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us," (2 Tim 1:14)
  - How can an overweight, out of shape guy guard anything if he doesn't know how to do his job, and isn't capable of doing his job?
- That's a simple metaphor, but the plain fact is that Timothy can't guard the faith unless:
  - (1) he's been formally trained and equipped to know what that faith is,
  - (2) and he's competent and capable enough to actually use those tools to help he and his congregation to grow in the faith, and fulfill their mission to reach its community with the Gospel

### **CONCLUSION:**

- Being a Pastor is the hardest, most demanding job on the planet. It's more than just "important;" lives are at stake, and he's responsible to shepherd and oversee a congregation of God's people as they all make their way in life together, serving the Lord and waiting for His return!
- This means:
  - (1) He must be a leader!
    - The great philosopher Harry Callahan once said, "a man's gotta know his limitations!"

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- This church shouldn't call a man who doesn't have the force of personality, and the leadership skills necessary to actually lead a congregation in this day and age
- (2) He has to be absolutely committed to the Bible, and the Gospel's implications for every corner of our lives
- (3) He has to be educated and capable
  - Each of these traits combine together, reinforce each other, and combine to fashion a man who's qualified to lead a local church
  - These are the characteristics which our next Pastor needs to have!