

Marks of a Good Pastor – Part 3

*Sunday Morning – February 25, 2018
Sleater Kinney Road Baptist Church, Olympia, WA*

1. OUTLINE:

STATEMENT	- ¹ But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of stress.
REASONS FOR STATEMENT (19)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ² For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ inhuman, implacable, slanderers, profligates, fierce, haters of good, ⁴ treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ holding the form of religion but denying the power of it.
COMMAND IN LIGHT OF ALL THIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Avoid such people.
explanation #1: they lead people into error	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ⁶ For among them are those who make their way into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and swayed by various impulses, ⁷ who will listen to anybody and can never arrive at a knowledge of the truth.
explanation #2: they oppose the Gospel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ⁸ As Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of corrupt mind and counterfeit faith; ⁹ but they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men.
PAUL'S EXAMPLE FOR TIMOTHY (contrast)	- ¹⁰ Now you have observed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, ¹¹ my persecutions, my sufferings,
DESCRIPTION OF SUFFERINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ what befell me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra, what persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me.
aside about living a godly life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ¹² Indeed all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, ¹³ while evil men and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceivers and deceived.
COMMAND IN LIGHT OF ALL THIS – CONTINUE IN THE GOSPEL	- ¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed,
source of Timothy's knowledge = Scripture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵ and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.
source of Scripture = God	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ¹⁶ All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,
purpose of Scripture = man's knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

2. TEXT:

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a. But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of stress (2 Tim 3:1)

- Timothy's ministry context wasn't just *stressful*; it would be *difficult* and *hard* (e.g. "perilous," KJV)
- Paul just told Timothy he's supposed to *gently* correct opponents, so that:
 - o (a) he'd win them to Christ,
 - o (b) and away from their error,
 - o (c) by the kind and winsome way He defends the Gospel:
 - **"And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly to every one, an apt teacher, forbearing, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant that they will repent and come to know the truth, and they may escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will,"** (2 Tim 2:24-26).
- Peter gave the same advice, because they both had the same teacher:
 - o **"Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is right? But even if you do suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts reverence Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence; and keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are abused, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame,"** (1 Pet 3:13-16)
- And, that's good advice, but Timothy needs to understand this - **"that in the last days perilous times shall come,"** (2 Tim. 3:1, KJV)
 - o It *might not be possible* for kindness and gentleness to win the day
- **Why on earth not?**
 - o Paul tells us why:

b. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, inhuman, implacable, slanderers, profligates, fierce, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of

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God, holding the form of religion but denying the power of it (2 Tim 3:2-5).

- Paul lists 19 different things here, and together they paint a picture of a completely ungodly, rebellious and hateful people
 - o These are the folks Timothy will be engaging in theological combat as he battles false teaching
 - o These are the things new Christians will be trying to get rid of as they grow in Christ
 - o These are the things that, collectively, explain:
 - (a) why God planned to send His Son,
 - (b) why the Son willingly and voluntarily came,
 - (c) and why He vowed to make all things new and start all over in the end, once and for all
- This list isn't exhaustive, but it gets to the heart of what it means ...
 - o (a) to *hate* God,
 - o (b) *hate* His law,
 - o (c) *hate* His power, jurisdiction and authority,
 - o (d) and to *exalt yourself*
- Here it is:
 - o (a) Lovers of self rather than lovers of God
 - Rebellion personified
 - o (b) Lovers of money
 - Craving material things instead of the only thing that truly matters in eternity – ask Solomon (Ecclesiastes) how that worked out for him
 - o (c) Proud, arrogant, swollen with conceit
 - Full of self-importance and self-righteousness, when they ought to be filled with *shame* and *disgrace* at their conduct, and *terror* at offending the Creator and Sustainer they hate so much
 - They hate the very Savior who sustains them and gives them breath, at this very moment
 - o (d) Abusive blasphemers
 - They not only hate God, they take pride in trumpeting their hatred

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- (e) disobedient to parents:
 - No respect for those who helped give you life, and provide for you – this is a microcosm of their hatred of Christ, their ultimate Creator and Sustainer
- (f) ungrateful and inhuman (i.e. unloving, unkind, etc.):
 - No sense of common grace, kindness and basic decency towards others – only malice, hatred and underhanded evil of all sorts
- (g) unholy and haters of good:
 - Opposed to everything God and His Word says is just and right
- (h) unforgiving, irreconcilable or implacable:
 - Forgiveness and charity doesn't exist in their cold, dead hearts
 - Love and patience are foreign concepts
- (i) slanderers:
 - They exist to tear others down and speak evil of others; these are the kind of people who'll shake your hand with a smile while they cut your heart out with a grapefruit spoon
- (j) profligate or without self-control; fierce or savage; reckless:
 - They're slaves to their lusts and passions
 - Like all unbelievers, they have free will, but that will that's enslaved to a **heart** that's as hard as stone, a **spirit** that's deader than last week's roadkill, and a **mind** that's energized and influenced by Satan
- (k) treacherous:
 - Their only loyalty is to themselves
- (l) lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God:

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- Their entire being is focused on self-gratification, on feeding that hungry furnace that is their lusts
- (m) holding the form of religion but denying the power of it
 - This is the umbrella concept that ties all these concepts together
 - People will like to project a glossy front of “religion,” but they won’t have any substance to them
 - Their actions and, more importantly *their motives*, will betray who they really worship
 - (1) The essence of sin isn’t about the outward actions; the commission of the crime
 - (2) Sin is actually about the motivations and desires in the heart, soul and mind which prompt those actions
 - (3) And, the Bible says those evil thoughts, desires and motives flow from something more fundamental – from a wicked soul that needs the new birth that Jesus came here to bring
 - (4) When someone becomes a Christian, the Holy Spirit power washes your soul with a cleansing flood of pure water, blasting your sins away like a 8,000,000,000 psi divine pressure washer
- The people Timothy will encounter won’t have all these vices; a few are enough!
 - But, they’re representative of a world that grows ever darker, ever more wicked, and ever more opposed to God and the Good News of His dear Son, Jesus Christ
 - This is the context Timothy will minister in

c. Avoid such people.

- Timothy needs to keep himself away from these people, and keep His congregation away from them, too
 - (a) How can he do that if he’s a coward?
 - (b) How can he “follow the pattern of the sound words” he heard from Paul ... if he isn’t totally committed to the Bible?

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- (c) How can he guard the Gospel if he isn't educated enough to see through their "form of religion," and capable enough to steer His flock away from their terrible errors?
- (d) How can Timothy lead his people to avoid these people if he never encourages self-examination, and preaches a cheap, commitment-less Gospel?
 - It isn't legalism to tell people God wants His people to do what He says!
- Just to make sure he understands why this is important, Paul gives Timothy two reasons to keep his folks away from these false Christians in difficult times:

d. For among them are those who make their way into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and swayed by various impulses, who will listen to anybody and can never arrive at a knowledge of the truth (2 Tim 3:6-7).

- This isn't a passage about how women are weak people (because that certainly isn't true; cf. 1 Pet 3:1-6)
- This is a passage about:
 - (a) one particular situation Paul and Timothy apparently know about (and we don't – surprise, surprise 😊),
 - (b) where these false teachers identified some weak people they could confuse with their lies,
 - (c) and they did it
- False teachers lead spiritually weak people into hell
 - I think that's a good reason to avoid them
 - I think that's a good reason to lead your congregation to avoid them
 - I also think that's a good reason why your Pastor:
 - (a) needs to be an educated, competent, capable leader
 - (b) who has the maturity to know when he should be gentle and kind or tough and uncompromising,
 - (c) calls people to introspection and self-examination,
 - (d) can spot grave error,
 - (e) and can lead the church to avoid these awful people

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e. As Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of corrupt mind and counterfeit faith; but they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men (2 Tim 3:8-9)

- These men were Pharaoh's magicians; the OT doesn't name them, but Jewish tradition says this is who they were:
 - o (a) They oppose the truth
 - o (b) They've corrupted and twisted minds, blinded by Satan
 - o (c) Their faith is fake, but it tries to pass as genuine
- Their key issue is that they're opposed to the Gospel,
 - o (a) and their efforts and energies are focused on snagging unwary Christians,
 - o (b) to drag them off into error with them
- But, in contrast to these awful people, Paul tells Timothy to follow a different path and persevere, to keep on keepin' on:

f. Now you have observed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions, my sufferings, (2 Tim 3:10-11a)

- Timothy has watched Paul throughout the years, seen him suffer, seen him persevere, seen his devotion to the Gospel:
 - o "... I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain salvation in Christ Jesus with its eternal glory," (2 Tim 2:10)

g. what befell me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra, what persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me (2 Tim 3:11b)

- Paul and Barnabas were driven out of Antioch, in modern-day Turkey (Acts 13:44-52)
- Angry Jews tried to kill them in Iconium (Acts 14:1-7)

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- Another mob almost stoned him to death at Lystra, instigated by angry Jews who followed them from Antioch
 - o This is what it means to “**endure everything for the sake of the elect,**” (2 Tim 2:10)
 - o This is what it means to “**shun youthful passions and aim at righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call upon the Lord from a pure heart,**” (2 Tim 2:22)

h. Indeed all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceivers and deceived (2 Tim 3:12-13)

- This is the lot in life every Christian should expect, and I’m not at all convinced this *just means* formal, external pressure and hostility from unbelievers
 - o Certainly, that’s Paul’s immediate context
 - o But, Christians face a supernatural foe, too – his name is Satan
 - (a) He’s the craftiest operator there is
 - (b) He acts through multiple cut-outs and middlemen
 - (c) He’s always at work, and like Professor Moriarity:
 - (i) his tentacles reach into every corner of this world,
 - (ii) and he’s the immediate cause of every work of evil and suffering on the globe
 - (d) If you trace every quiver and vibration on the web of evil, pain and suffering he’s spun across the earth, you’ll eventually find him sitting right at the center – a poisonous black widow spider in the center of the web, controlling the levers which bring death, destruction and untold miseries on everything in his jurisdiction
 - (e) Like an evil Field Marshal, he sits in his headquarters and sends his legions out to do battle against Christ by attacking the Christ-followers – the Christians who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus
- Christians will face increasing persecution, and unbelievers will grow worse and worse

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- Like a satanic blood-pressure cuff that *just keeps tightening*, Paul warns us that the pressures and problems of this world *will keep constricting us*
 - (a) He doesn't offer a rosy escape hatch
 - (b) He doesn't offer you money, sex, health, wealth or prosperity
 - (c) He doesn't lie to you
 - (d) He doesn't lie to Timothy
- Instead, he calls Timothy (and us) to the end-game, the light at the end of the tunnel – and *that light isn't an oncoming freight train*, it's Christ's return and the praise you'll receive from Him on that glorious day:
 - **Read 1 Pet 1:3-9**

i. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus (2 Tim 3:14-15).

- We've heard this before:
 - (a) Paul tells Timothy to stick to the Gospel,
 - (b) to follow the pattern of sound words from the Jewish Scriptures,
 - (c) and that "rule of faith" Christ passed on to His followers,
 - (d) that Paul passed along to Him,
 - (e) that God then moved men to write down and preserve for all generations to have and cherish
- Follow my example, you've seen me live it day by day
- Expect persecution as long as you try to live a godly life in Christ
- Stick to the Gospel and stick to the Scriptures:
 - (a) stick to the faith once for all delivered to the saints,
 - (b) stick with Christ,
 - (c) stick with the prophets,
 - (d) stick with Solomon's lessons from Ecclesiastes,
 - (e) stick with God's promises of the new world to come,

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- (f) stick with the promise that Christ left heaven, took on a human nature so that **“through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage,”** (Heb 2:14-15),
- (g) stick with the promise that Christ is our perfect, final High Priest who stands between us and our Holy God, with love in His heart and an open door for whosoever wills to join His Father’s family and experience perfect forgiveness, reconciliation, redemption and adoption ...
 - if you’ll only tell God you’re sorry for your rebellion, and believe in who Jesus is and what He came to do for sinners

j. All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work (2 Tim 3:16-17)

- The source of Scripture is God, who gave it to us as a lamp for our feet, and a light for our paths, so that we’d hide his word in our hearts, so that we might not sin against God:
 - (a) because we know where we come from, and where all creation comes from
 - (b) we know what went wrong in the Garden so long ago, and how that ruined everything in Creation – including ourselves
 - (c) we know the plan of redemption God announced to Eve, the same one He promised to Moses and the prophets, the same one He made good on in the incarnation when Christ came here to be perfect, suffer and die for our sins
 - (d) and, we know the end-game; that Christ is coming back to defeat Satan, make all things new - ***to install a new operating system!***
 - But, unlike Windows 10 or the Android operating system on your phone, there won’t be any updates, upgrades or patches to download!

3. CONCLUSION:

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- **What does all this have to do with a Pastor, and the decision our congregation will be making sometime in the next six weeks?**
 - (1) A Pastor has a tough job, and has to deal with some tough situations and some tough people
 - This means he has to watch out for his church, and lead the people to identify, mark and avoid false teachers
 - This problem will never get better; it will always get worse and worse
 - This means this man needs to be an educated, competent, capable leader who has the spiritual maturity to navigate these tricky waters and guide our church through the rapids, so we arrive safely on the other shore
 - (2) A Pastor has to be totally committed to the Gospel, to the Bible, to preaching, teaching and applying all of Scripture – and leading all the leaders and people in this church to do the same in our little orbits of influence
 - You might think this is commonsense, but this is what Paul chose to emphasize to Timothy, his protégé – *that means it's pretty important*
 - (3) These two tasks, together, encompass everything I've mentioned so far as a packaged deal:
 - (a) Leadership
 - (b) Total commitment to the Bible
 - (c) Educated, capable and competent – so he can guard the truth
 - (d) Trains and educates new leaders
 - (e) Totally committed to the Gospel ministry
 - (f) A guy who urges self-examination and introspection
 - (g) Balanced and theologically mature
 - (h) Spiritually mature
 - (i) Able to teach
- Finally:
 - (1) Does that awful list describe you, your heart, or your desires?
 - (2) Are certain you're a Christian? The Apostle Peter wrote:

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- **“... make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these things are yours and abound, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these things is blind and shortsighted and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. Therefore, brethren, be the more zealous to confirm your call and election, for if you do this you will never fall; so there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,” (2 Pet 1:5-11)**
 - Is this your desire?
- **(3)** Does the Gospel bore you?
 - When we read the Bible, we hear God speaking to us – not in a mystical way, but in a real way!
 - Is the Bible cardboard to you?
 - Do you hold the form of religion, but deny the power of it?
- **(4)** Call to the Gospel