

Delivered at APC (SA)

Text(s):1Tim 4:16

Date: 13-28 September

Introduction

We continue in our study of the theme “The Biblical Pastor”. Yesterday, we considered two themes under this subject: namely, “The pastor as a man called by God” and “The pastor as preacher of the Law and the gospel.” We now turn our attention to the theme, “**The pastor in his personal holiness as leader of the church**”. Our text is 1Tim 4:16. Paul was writing to Timothy basically to give him instructions on the organization of the church and on conducting his ministry. One of those instructions related to the relationship between his life and those who here him. There are three things Paul says to him in this regard:

Exposition

1) He must watch his life. To watch means to be alert, to see to it that careless living does not overtake us. (1 Timothy 4:7, 12; 6:11).

The healthy life of the man of God is critical for efficient, God owned ministry. ‘As a general rule, sustained effectiveness in pastoral ministry will be realized in direct proportion to the health and vigour of the whole redeemed humanity of the man of God’. The scriptures set forth a cause and effect relationship between what a servant of God is as a man and what he accomplishes as a minister of the word. (1Thess 1:4-5, 2:10-12; 1Tim 4:16, 5:22-23). You can have all the communication gimmicks, and can hold a crowd, but have no genuine spiritual effectiveness without health and vigour in your redeemed humanity.

The man of God therefore, must see it that he is fulfilling his primary duty to nurture his own soul, growing in the graces of true Christ likeness and godliness. This raises the question, how can the pastor nurture his soul in such a way that he is effectively able to realise the goal of glorifying God, winning souls and edifying the saints?

There are several things he needs to be doing:

a) The giving of himself to Tribulations (Acts 14:22, John 16:33, Matt 5:10-12). Suffering is a means of growing in grace. This is a means outside our control but one that we nonetheless need to submit to.

b) The devotional assimilation of the word of God (Psalm 119:9-11; Joshua 1:8; Ps1:1-3; John 17:17) this devotional assimilation of God’s word ought to have a few essential elements to it, namely: it ought to be structured and consistent; it ought to be systematic and comprehensive; it ought to be prayerful and meditative.

c) The habit and spirit of secret prayer (Matt 6:5-6; Eph 6:18; Jude 20). The habit and discipline of secret prayer as a discipline, has multifaceted benefits. Vital, personal communion with Christ is renewed and increased (Eph 3:14-19). One's perspective on reality is kept in focus (1Cor 4:18; Psalm 73; 16, 17), one's own sins are seen in their true light (Ps 90:8; Isaiah 6:1ff), one's pardon and acceptance before God are sealed afresh to the heart (Psalm 130:3; 1John 1:9) and one receives grace for the work at hand.

d) Engaging in the habit of periodic self-examination and protracted seasons of prayer. Our Lord Jesus spent time alone with God for extended periods of time. These times are absolutely necessary for spiritual health and vitality because remaining indwelling sin is so powerful.

e) The maintenance of a good conscience before God and men (Acts 24:16; 1Tim 1:18-19).

f) Living the holy life.

That is to say setting yourself apart from sin to God. Closing the gap between your identity and your behaviour. When our identity lines up with our behaviour we look more and more like Jesus.

2. He must watch his doctrine.

a) He must watch what he believes. What he believes must be sound doctrine, that is to say teaching that is rooted in the scriptures (2Tim 3:16), and teaching that is apostolic. In 2Thess 2:15, Paul speaks about traditions that they taught. Paul in 1Co 11:23 says: "I received from the Lord what I also handed over (*paredōka*) unto you

In 2Thess there are a number of such doctrines mentioned: ***The first, according to*** verses 13-14 is

i). The Love of God. Verse 13: "But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord . . ." In other words the first steel strand in the cable of hope is the active, powerful, pursuing, saving love of God that tracks us down in our rebellion until we collapse and then awakens us new people in Christ. To know yourself distinguishingly, particularly, personally, effectually, irresistibly, unbreakably, and eternally loved by God is the central strand of steel in the cable of hope. So Paul says, Hold on to it, and stand firm.

ii. Election. The second strand in the cable is the apostolic tradition of election. Reading verse 13 again: "But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God chose you . . ." Now how does Paul know this? Paul was persuaded of their election because of their response to the gospel! They received it in such a way that not even persecution could dampen their joy in Christ and their imitation of godliness.

iii). Salvation (or Glorification). The third strand of the cable that Paul mentions in verse 13 is salvation, or as we can call it from verse 14, glorification. Verse 13: "But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God chose you from the

beginning to be saved . . . " Notice that salvation is something future here, not past. The way you know this is by noticing the next phrase—they were chosen to be saved "through sanctification." Sanctification is the lifelong process of becoming holy. If we are saved through sanctification, then salvation in this verse is something that we are looking forward to, not something that has already happened. And what is it? Verse 14 makes that plain: "To this you were called through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

iv. Sanctification by the Spirit . The fourth strand in the cable of hope is sanctification by the Spirit. At the end of verse 13: "God chose you to be saved through sanctification by the Spirit." ***and belief in the truth. Saving Faith Is the Power the Spirit Uses***

This is why sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth are not distinct acts. It is not as though our faith in the truth and the Spirit's sanctifying work run in separate parallel tracks and have nothing to do with each other. No. Saving faith, with all its impulse to love the truth, is the power that the Spirit uses to make us holy.

v) God's Call and

vi) The Gospel

From all eternity God loved the church at Thessalonica. He chose them from the beginning from all the sinners in Macedonia. He sent Paul to them with the gospel—the good news that Jesus Christ came into the world to die for hopeless sinners. And in the preaching of that gospel God called his elect with overcoming power to himself. And the result was that they believed the truth and began to be sanctified by the Spirit. And they will one day obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

vii) The second coming of Christ (1Thess 3:13;2Thess 2:17).

The doctrines were delivered by the apostle to the Thessalonians; in his preaching, private conversation, and by these epistles; and particularly the first epistle, as the apostle here states. Whatever these traditions were, as to their matter, they were a revelation from God; for they came by men who spake and acted under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. That whilst the apostles were in being, there were two ways of delivering the truth, and that was by word of mouth and writing. So in the text: 'Whether by word or our epistle.' Jude ver. 3, 'It was needful for me to write unto you.'

This is sound doctrine. This is what can make a the life of a minister and a Christian whole.

b) He must watch what he teaches. What he believes is what he must teach and preach. He must correctly divide and apply it.

3.He must persevere in his life and doctrine, in spite of the many challenges that he may face.

4.He must watch his life and doctrine for his salvation and that of the church.

Mc Cheyne use to say “the life of a minister is the life of the ministry”. If a pastor would see progress in the ministry, he must give himself to the cultivation of the holy life.

Conclusion

A Biblical pastor must invest in holiness and Christ-likeness if he would see progress in the ministry. He will see numerical and qualitative growth in his work.