

What Is a Pastor For?

Rev. Philip Zielinski

You are contemplating enrolling in the seminary to become a pastor in Christ's Church. But why does the Church need another pastor? Why does the Church need you to answer God's call to be a shepherd of His sheep? What are pastors for, and why should that be your calling? The answers to your questions lie within our Lord Jesus' institution of the office of pastor and His continued care for His flock through His undershepherds.

Twice in the Gospels Jesus is deeply moved because those who were coming out to Him were "as sheep without a shepherd" (Matthew 9:36; Mark 6:34). Both times, what follows teaches us about the ministry of the Gospel and every Christian's need for a servant of Christ, a pastor.

In Matthew, Jesus declares that "the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:37). Then he calls the twelve apostles and gives them authority over unclean spirits and diseases. Seeing the abundant harvest that was waiting, the Lord of the harvest sends out His laborers with His own authority. He gives shepherds to sheep who had none.

In Mark, Jesus begins to teach these sheep who had no shepherd. Then, as the hour grew late, the need for food grew urgent, Jesus tells His disciples, "You give them something to eat." Then He fills their empty hands from the five loaves and two fish so they have more than enough to give all something to eat. The Good Shepherd gives His servants all that they need to tend the flock and care for them. They were no longer without a shepherd.

Finally, in John 21, as Jesus sits and eats with some of His disciples, He takes a moment with Peter. Simon Peter had boldly promised to stay with his Lord, even suffer death rather than fall away, only to falter three times during the dark hours of Jesus' passion. Now, Jesus asks him three times, "Simon, do you love me?" Each time, Peter answers "yes" in stark contrast to his denials only days before. Three times Jesus directs Peter to care for the sheep of his fold: "Feed my lambs," "tend my sheep,"

“feed my sheep.” It is as though he says to Peter, “My death and resurrection cover your sins of denial. You are forgiven and so you love me. As you love me, love these to whom I send you. They are my beloved lambs, my precious ones. Feed them, protect them, and tend them as I would.”

Without a faithful pastor, every Christian and every soul is wandering, lost as a sheep without a shepherd. Beloved, do you love your Lord Jesus? Then feed His sheep, protect His sheep, and lead His sheep! Tend the flock to which God is calling you so that in His work, through you, His people will have a shepherd who will love them, tend them, lead them, protect them, and feed them.

Every Christian needs a shepherd. Every soul needs a pastor. There is a flock who needs you.

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