

a sermon from JEREMIAH 3:15&23:4:

EVERY CHRISTIAN NEEDS A PASTOR!

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I. A PRAYER

Let us pray: “May The Lord JESUS touch our eyes, as He did those of the blind. Then shall we begin to see in visible things those which are invisible. May He open our eyes to gaze, not on present realities, but on the blessings to come. May He open the eyes of our heart to contemplate GOD in Spirit, through JESUS CHRIST The Lord, to Whom belong power and glory through all eternity!”¹ AMEN.

II. A PROPOSITION

The Almighty has set over His people godly men to be Pastors and Shepherds, that they may be guided and kept in righteousness and holiness unto Him!

III. A SCRIPTURE - JEREMIAH 3:15&23:4 – GOD GIVES PASTORS & SHEPHERDS

15: And I will give you pastors according to Mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

4: And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith The LORD.²

IV. INTRODUCTION - “DO I REALLY NEED A PASTOR?”

The question is often heard today in Christendom, “Do I really need a Pastor?” The Almighty answers emphatically, “Yes, o foolish man!” The many functions of the Shepherds of the redeemed in CHRIST are all ordained by The Lord, and may be found only within The Church. Pastors exist and function within The Body of CHRIST to minister to GOD’s people and to point them to The Saviour in all that they do. Not having a Pastor implies that one is not part of The Church on earth. And yet our Lord JESUS CHRIST specifically commands the Christian man to not separate himself from The Church. And it is the Pastor that exhorts men to receive the grace of salvation within The Church and to remain faithful servants of The Church. Let us therefore carefully consider what The LORD decrees for our good!

We may turn to The Word of GOD as revealed to us by the hand of the prophet Jeremiah in JEREMIAH 3:15&23:4, which declares that GOD sets His Pastors and Shepherds over

¹ 1, Catholic Family Prayer Book, Prayer for Insight, Saint Origen, p 337.

² 2, KJV, JEREMIAH 3:15&23:4.

His people: “And I will give you pastors according to Mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith The LORD.”³ From This Scripture, we may make a beginning to answer this vital question of many Christians today, “Do I really need a Pastor?”

V. WHAT IS A PASTOR?

The Pastor is “the feeder, protector, and guide, or shepherd, of a flock of GOD’s people in New Testament times... the nourishing of and caring for GOD’s people.”⁴ “Pastor” comes from the Latin word “pastum,” which means “to feed.” “A shepherd [is] one that has the care of the flocks and herds.” He is “a minister of the Gospel who has the charge of a Church and congregation, whose duty is to watch over the people of his charge, and instruct them in the sacred doctrines of the Christian religion.”⁵ The Pastor’s duty is always to be understood as “relating to the care of souls.”⁶

VI. A PASTOR HELPS US BENEFIT FROM THE DIVINE GIFTS OF THE CHURCH

Where are the Spiritual gifts of Christian people found, and where are they brought into service, but in The Church? And it is there, in The Body of CHRIST, that GOD has called Pastors to help us benefit from those Divine gifts given to The Church. Saint Paul declares in EPHESIANS 4:11-12 that GOD has set some of His saints in The Church to be, among other things, Pastors over His people: “And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of The Body of CHRIST.”⁷

“Pastors and teachers. These two terms go together. The first word means shepherds. Those who are the shepherds of the flock are also to be teachers. The true

³ 2, KJV, JEREMIAH 3:15&23:4.

⁴ 3, , Illustrated Dictionary of Bible, p 803, “Pastor.”

⁵ 4, Noah Webster’s 1828 Dictionary, p PAS-PAT, “Pastor,” noun # 2.

⁶ 4, Noah Webster’s 1828 Dictionary, p PAS-PAT, “Pastor,” adjective # 3.

⁷ 2, KJV, EPHESIANS 4:11-12.

pastor should carry on an expository preaching ministry of The Word [of GOD].”⁸ GOD has ordained many gifts to His Church on earth. But those gifts do not take the form of some abstract cloud that hovers over The Church. Rather, His gifts are given to different men in different local Churches as GOD determines for the benefit of His saints. You can not access these gifts except within The Church. And, once entering The Church on earth as a Christian, how is a man to learn from them, except that there be upright clergy to pastor and guide him?

The Pastor is to “train others” in the Divine knowledge and skills needed to do the “work of the ministry” of The Church. For it’s the duty of the “leaders [of The Church to train up the saints] for the purpose of perfecting or equipping believers to carry on this work.”⁹ For unless the soldier of The Cross is properly trained, how will he know how to handle his weapons in the daily real-world and spiritual warfare of life? How will the troops of The Lord know to march together as GOD’s army of faith, unless they are drilled and prepared for the fray? How will the people of GOD learn to trust and obey that which GOD has decreed for them, unless they are commanded by a faithful Shepherd?

VII. PASTORS SHEPHERD US IN THE FAITH WITH BIBLE PREACHING & TEACHING

GOD gives His people Pastors to shepherd us in The Faith with Bible preaching and teaching. Here we turn again to Saint Paul, for he says in ROMANS 10:13-17, “For whosoever shall call upon The Name of The Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in Whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?... So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by The Word of GOD!”¹⁰

“The Divine [special] revelation [of CHRIST The Saviour] must be made known to us, before we can receive it and ascent to it; it is not born with us... Somebody must

⁸ 5, Wycliffe Bible Commentary, p 1310-1311, EPHESIANS 4:11.

⁹ 5, Wycliffe Bible Commentary, p 1311, EPHESIANS 4:12.

¹⁰ 2, KJV, ROMANS 10:13-17.

tell them [the lost] what they are to believe.”¹¹ The Pastor is a preacher of The Word of GOD. And without preaching of The Gospel, how is a man to hear GOD’s Word, that he may be convicted of his sins? And without preaching, how is he to hear of salvation offered to him by CHRIST The Saviour?

Yes, let every man believe and call upon The Name of The Lord, that he may be blessed in this life and dwell forever with The Creator in the next life. And while faith comes to a man by the hand of Providence, an instrument ordained to draw him into The Church and keep him there in vibrant fellowship with CHRIST and the brethren is the Pastor. For a man may have intellectual ascent to the concept of The Messiah, but he requires a Pastor to shepherd his soul with GOD’s Word through life in this fallen world.

VIII. A PASTOR COUNSELS AND FEEDS US WITH GODLY KNOWLEDGE & WISDOM

Pastors are set as shepherds by The Good Shepherd Himself over the saints to feed them with godly knowledge and wisdom. The prophet Jeremiah speaks to us in JEREMIAH 3:15&23:4, “And I will give you pastors according to Mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith The LORD.”¹²

GOD promises His people that He will send righteous men to be Pastors over His congregations of the faithful. And these men sent by GOD to guide the souls of the faithful in The Church shall have hearts that reveal the love of GOD for His people. “It is well with a people when their Pastors are after GOD’s own heart, ...who shall conform to His example, who rule for Him and, as they are capable, rule like Him.”¹³ And when we submit to GOD-fearing clergy as part of The Church on earth, GOD promises that we need no longer be fearful and dismayed by the trials of life. For when we sit under godly Pastors properly ordained by The Church, our Christian souls shall lack for nothing that GOD deems necessary for our salvation. And how is a man alone without a Pastor, and

¹¹ 6, Matthew Henry’s Commentary, p 2220-2221, ROMANS 10:12-21.

¹² 2, KJV, JEREMIAH 3:15&23:4.

thus without being part of The Church, able to receive these Divine blessings?

IX. A PASTOR BAPTIZES & GUIDES US INTO COMMUNITY WITH GOD

A Pastor is set over GOD's people to baptize and guide them into community with GOD and with one another. We may see the shadow of this truth in Saint Matthew's recording of The Lord's Great Commission to His Church in MATTHEW 28:19-20: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in The Name of The Father, and of The Son, and of The Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen!" For if there is no Pastor over GOD's people, duly ordained to serve within The faithful Church, where is the authority to baptize and guide the saints into fellowship with The Lord?

Now since CHRIST commands that all Christians be baptized in the Name of GOD The Father, Son and Holy Ghost, who is it that performs the baptism? And who gives the instruction on the Christian life before the baptism? And who will teach the one baptized to observe all things that GOD has commanded Christians to keep? For as the baptized believer in CHRIST The Saviour emerges from the baptismal waters into a new life of faith, it is the Pastor who fulfills all these rolls.

The Pastor is ordained by CHRIST and commissioned by The Church to teach Christians "the proper manner of life." The Pastor receives this "blessed promise that CHRIST's Presence... [and] His authority shall empower His servants to perform this Great Commission."¹⁴ For without a Pastor, and thus without a Church, the lone seeker of GOD is lost.

X. A PASTOR ANOINTS AND PRAYS OVER THE SICK & SUFFERING

Saint James counsels us to call for the elders of The Church when we are sick or suffering in JAMES 5:14, that they may anoint and pray over us. So he writes, "Is any

¹³ 6, Matthew Henry's Commentary, p 1226, JEREMIAH 3, Verses 12-19.

¹⁴ 5, Wycliffe Bible Commentary, p 985, MATTHEW 28:1-20.

sick among you? let him call for the elders of The Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in The Name of The Lord.”¹⁵ But a man alone outside The Church and thus without a Pastor will have no elders in The Faith to minister to him when he falls into illness, injury, pain or affliction!¹⁶

Scripture tells us that when our bodies fail us and become sick, the Church fathers are to be called to pray over us and to anoint our bodies with oil as aids to our faith. This may be done by elders of The local Church, as well as by the Pastor, for they serve under his authority and all together are under The Lord. CHRIST is to be called upon and His mercy and grace to be sought in such times with intercessory prayer. And is an ill man who is alone outside the body of CHRIST on earth to pray over himself and anoint himself with oil in the Name of The LORD? Certainly a man needs a Pastor to minister to him in such times.

XI. A PASTOR GIVES EXAMPLE OF PIOUS, PURE AND GODLY CHRISTIAN LIVING

Saint Peter declares that Pastors are set before GOD’s people to give examples of pious, pure and godly Christian living. So he says in I PETER 5:2-3, “Feed the flock of GOD which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over GOD's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock!”¹⁷

The LORD has ordained Pastors to feed His people with the Word of GOD, ruling with love over the souls of men with the hearts of servants. “Does not this recall CHRIST’s words to Peter, ‘Feed My sheep?’ (JOHN21:15-17)? Perhaps the ministerial designation ‘Pastor’ (shepherd), as applied to ‘elders’ may have come from here.”¹⁸ Pastors are further to rule over GOD’s people in love, not as taskmasters, but as servants. And by having the love of CHRIST in their hearts, Pastors are to be an example to the saints of how to live a godly life in imitation of CHRIST Himself. So it is not possible

¹⁵ 2, KJV, JAMES 5:14.

¹⁶ 2, KJV, MATTHEW 28:19-20.

¹⁷ 2, KJV, I PETER 5:2-3.

¹⁸ 5, Wycliffe Bible Commentary, p 1451, I PETER 5:1-7.

for a lone man without a Pastor and thus outside The Church to step back from himself to model his life on himself.

XII. PASTORS ARE GOD'S MESSENGER WHO DIRECT US INTO HOLINESS

The Pastor is GOD's messenger, correcting and directing us into holiness before GOD. The prophet Malachi writes of this in MALACHI 2:1,6,7: "And now, O ye priests, this Commandment is for you... The Law of Truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with Me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity. For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek The Law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of The LORD of Hosts."¹⁹

As the Christian Pastor is today, so the ancient Israelite Priests were called to teach the people according to GOD's Word and by godly living. "The Priest who walked with GOD turned many to righteousness... Priests were appointed by GOD in part to set forth a knowledge of GOD and His will."²⁰ The Pastor is to be a virtuous and pious man, educated in the mysteries of The Holy Bible, loving in reaching out to all who will hear, ordained by The Church to be a servant of GOD and men, answerable to GOD in all that he does, and sanctified by the indwelling presence of The Holy Spirit. The lone Christian man without a Pastor and thus outside The Church can hardly expect to so minister to himself before GOD!

XIII. THE QUESTION IS ANSWERED: "YES, EVERY MAN NEEDS A PASTOR!"

So now we have our answer: "Yes, every Christian man needs a Pastor!" The Pastor carries out the many blessings and functions for and on behalf of the people. He expounds the Word of GOD to the people. He visit's the sick, injured and suffering. He exhorts sinners to repent of their sins and to be baptized in the Name of GOD The Father, Son and Holy Ghost. He performs vital Christian life ceremonies, such as weddings, confirmation, baptism, last rights and burials.

¹⁹ 2, KJV, MALACHI 2:1,6,7.

²⁰ 5, Wycliffe Bible Commentary, p 915, MALACHI 2.1-2.7.

The Pastor administers the holy Sacraments of The Church to the flock. He counsels, teaches, preaches and testifies on behalf of The LORD to men both inside The Church and outside The Church. He maintains right order in The Church. He provides an example of a pious, pure and godly Christian life in humbleness and love, sprinkled with boldness and correction. He protects the faithful from errors in The Faith and calls The Church to remain a pure and unblemished bride for our Lord JESUS CHRIST.

Given all these things that a Pastor does for the people of GOD placed in his care, can a man alone and not part of The Body of CHRIST on earth - which is The Church – and expect to share in all these great blessings which a Pastor provides? Most certainly not! A man must be part of the Church and her daily life. This can not be if men are not under the guidance and authority of a Pastor within a local Church!

XIV. IN CONCLUSION

Indeed, The Almighty has set over His people godly men to be Pastors and Shepherds, that they may be guided and kept in righteousness and holiness unto Him! As the prophet declares in JEREMIAH 3:15&23:4, “And I will give you pastors according to Mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith The LORD!”²¹ What GOD has then ordained, let us not cast aside in rebellion, for truly the Christian man needs a Pastor! In The Name of GOD The Father, and The Son and The Holy Ghost. AMEN.

²¹ 2, KJV, JEREMIAH 3:15&23:4.

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