

# Pastors and Teachers

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[ 0 : 00 ] Now we're going to continue our series this evening on gifts of the Spirit that we've been looking at and this evening we're looking at pastors and teachers and I'm going to read two passages.

I'm going to read a slightly shorter passage from 1 Peter chapter 5. I'm just going to read verses 1 to 5 and then we'll read from Ephesians chapter 4 which gives us one of the lists of the gifts of the Spirit.

So the first is from 1 Peter chapter 5 verses 1 to 6, sorry, and that's speaking about elders and pastors and shepherds.

So I exhort the elders among you as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed. Shepherd the flock of God that is among you exercising oversight, not under compulsion but willingly as God would have you, not for shameful gain but eagerly, not domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock.

And when the chief shepherd appears you will receive the unfading crown of glory. Likewise you who are younger be subject to the elders, clothe yourselves all of you with humility towards one another, for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. And then also a short passage from Ephesians chapter 4 and from verse 10 Ephesians chapter 4 from verse 10 to verse 17.

[ 1 : 41 ] He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all heavens that he might fill all things. And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of faith and the knowledge of the Son of God to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

So that we may not be children tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness and deceitful schemes. Rather speaking the truth in love we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ from whom the whole body joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped when each part is working properly makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Okay, and that's the passage that has some of the gifts of the Spirit that we're looking at. And this evening we're looking at the way God equips the church with shepherds and teachers.

Okay, so what does the church mean to you? What, when I use the word the church what does it mean to you? I'm sure we have different ideas of what the church is, some more narrow as some broader.

For some of you it may be since ease. For others it might just be going to church, whatever that means for you. It might just be a Sunday service that happens when you go along to church.

[ 3 : 16 ] For others it's the institution, Philip was talking about, the free church, general assembly that meets here. And some of us would think of that as the church, the kind of the institution of the church. As ministers we just think the world revolves around the church, our church.

And its activity and its worship are very narrow-minded and focused in that way, which is ridiculous of course, because it's much broader than that. And we've had a great visual example of that this evening with the work of OM.

And really the church in the Bible, the word for the church is the word that we get ecclesiastical from which is a church kind of word. Ecclesia just means the called out ones.

That's what church means, it means it's the gathering of people together who belong to the Lord. It's a community of people who would all call themselves Christians, who would call themselves followers of Jesus, Jesus followers.

It's the body of believers who God dwells among, who God is in through the presence of His Spirit. So that's really what the church is, it has local outworkings and it is visible.

[ 4 : 27 ] But it's also throughout the whole world, whatever, that are Christians. And we're a people who are called the called out ones because we're going somewhere. We're all going somewhere.

That's why it matters. That's why I like the kind of shortened version of our vision statement was that we're on mission in community because we're on a mission, we're going somewhere. We're going to meet with Jesus Christ ultimately and we want to share His message.

So really the church is about a people, it's about people and a person. It's about us as people and it's about Jesus as a person who can be known through His word as we know and understand, who can be experienced through the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives when we come to Jesus by faith and trust in Him.

And we're, He's our head then, we're encouraged to follow Him and to serve Him and to love together as we move forward on our way to heaven.

And just as we've been reminded of in the videos this evening, very palpably and very visually, in any community, in any family, there's lots of different people and there's lots of different gifts needed.

[ 5 : 44 ] The Bible speaks about that, about the church being like a body with all its different parts, with Christ as the head or it's like a building that needs joiners and electricians and decorators and all these kind of things but who has an architect, who's an overall someone who is designed and who is moving the building forward.

And it's a team we all cooperate and we learn and we value each other with all the different gifts we have. Now we've mentioned, we're going to mention each week that when we're looking at the gifts of the Spirit, there's four things we really want you to take away.

The gifts of the Spirit are given by God for His glory, they're many and diverse. Okay? So first thing, second thing is that they're for the building up of the church as we all work together.

The third thing is that the gifts of the Spirit have common elements for all believers but unique aspects only for some. And we'll see that a bit this evening.

And also the gifts of the Spirit are worthless without love, without the love of Christ. So we see these things. Now this evening we're looking at pastors and teachers as one gift, shepherds and teachers as we have here in Ephesians 4 verse 11.

[ 6 : 59 ] And we're going to look at that this evening as a gift that's given to the church. Okay? A pastor or a shepherd as it's called here is just someone who takes care of the flow. That's what a shepherd does.

Now I know we're mainly all city dwellers here but you all get the idea of a shepherd and what's involved in shepherding. Someone who cares for the flow, that's what the pastor is.

And the teacher is someone who imparts knowledge, wisdom and knowledge. An instructor, someone who's gifted and who is knowledgeable. Okay, why this gift then?

Why is this gift given to the church as all the gifts are given to the church? Why does God feel the necessity to give this gift to us as the church? And I'll speak about it being separated later but we'll call it one gift here, pastor, teacher.

Two very simple things. We need to be cared for as lovers. Okay? I don't mean the romantic sense of that word, I just mean that we love, okay?

[ 8 : 02 ] People who are made to love. So as lovers we need shepherded as God's people, we need cared for, that's why we need a pastor. But also we're learners.

So we're lovers and we're learners, okay? And as learners we need to be taught and we need to teach and we need to be equipped to live our Christian lives. So we're lovers and we're learners and God sees that in His family and He sees the need for the pastor, teacher to help in that.

Now, we've said that these gifts are gifts that we all share but some have and are gifted by the Holy Spirit in a very particular way.

You know, we see that with hospitality or we see it with some of the other giftings that we will be looking at as well. So what I'm saying in the first place is we all share in this work.

So the DNA of every church is that we should be loving and they should be learning. That's why God's given this gift because He knows we need to be loved and He knows we need to learn.

[ 9 : 04 ] Now, you might not, and other people might not have a special gifting to be pastors, to be shepherds of the flock. But everyone needs cared for and everyone can care.

Do you see the difference? Not everyone has a specific gift of pastoring but everyone can care. We all need to be loved and we all need to give love within the church.

It's sin within us that makes us haters. Yeah, that's right, isn't it? It's sin separates us, it makes us haters. And yet we are to be people within the church who recognize the importance of loving. We all need that belonging. We all need to battle against isolation and rejection and loneliness. And so we need to be carers, we need to be pastors, and we need to be willing to be pastored ourselves, to be cared for.

That's God's model of family that He has for us. Yeah, I say, well, I don't know, I don't know if I've got a role in this church. I don't know if I've got a gifting in this church.

[10:10] Let's go back to the very beginning and remind ourselves that every Christian is the two greatest gifts of all, the Holy Spirit and God's grace. You have eyes, you have hands, you have feet, you have a home, you have a voice, you have a personality, and you can use these things to care for other people, to shepherd other people, to look out for others.

It's a great thing to have a pastoral mindset and pastoral thinking to know others, to lead them, to feed them and to protect them as a loving community.

So we're all to recognize the DNA, the significance of having a loving community under Christ, God has given us that, but also to be a learning community. Okay, we're lovers, but we're also learners, and everyone has a role, both to learn and to teach.

We're all disciples, and it's pride or it's sin that makes us unteachable, but our lives, our example, our care, all of these things, our understanding of the word, our previous mistakes enable us and help us to love, but also to teach one another.

He wants us to be students of the Word, of the Bible, and students of life, not just for our own learning, but to benefit others. And we all have a greater or lesser ability to do that.

[11:33] So all of us have a responsibility to develop a loving and a learning community, which reflects Jesus Christ. So we're not simply on our own, we're part of His family.

But we also recognize that some are specifically gifted by the Holy Spirit and set apart to be pastors and teachers over the flock of God, as it's so often described in the Bible.

And I think that's important because we often misunderstand the church and God's teaching about the church. The church is rubbish sometimes, isn't it?

And we want to give up on the church sometimes. But it is the local church, and it's the church that God gives us and models for us in the New Testament, and gives us a pattern for in the New Testament.

And the structures that He gives us in the New Testament are because He loves us, and because He wants us to be a loving and a learning community. So as part of that, as part of the great, diverse giftings that He gives to the church, He gives the church pastor teachers.

[12:47] That is those who have the gift of caring and teaching in the church, and they're given a specific office in the church.

We see it throughout the New Testament that they are given the office of the elder, but that's what I am, that's what the elders here are, the elder, the overseer, or the bishop, it's called.

They're all the same role, different emphasis. And we see that the elder that is set apart in the local church to care for and to teach in the local church is an office that is given by God because He cares for and He loves the church.

So the elder is the one with both these gifts, shepherd teacher, and these gifts are fused together. I think there's definitely a case to be made for people being able to be shepherds, and possibly not teachers, and teachers, possibly not shepherds, but when they come together, a shepherd teacher, that is the gifting that enables and qualifies them to be called and set apart by God and the Holy Spirit to be elders in the church.

First Timothy 5, 17, I think says, let the elders rule well who are considered worthy of double, and especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.

[14:11] So there's gifts, and elders are set apart in every church in the New Testament, and there's also some that are set aside specifically to be those who teach and have these gifts.

So why is it important? Why is it fundamental to God's community? God sees it as important, and He made sure that every church had this element of loving and learning within it, and every individual within the church.

So Acts 14 verse 20, I'm just going to do a one or two verses from the Bible when they had pointed elders to the apostles, appointed elders for them in every church with prayer and fasting, they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

So in every church, this was the pattern, loving and learning through the pastor teacher, and it was hugely important. Why is that? Why is it important that God has done this?

Firstly, because it reflects the character of Jesus himself, John chapter 11, 10 verse 11, I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

[15:21] And we read in 1 Peter that he is the chief shepherd. Now that's a great way to describe Jesus. So the church is reflecting who Jesus is. He is the great shepherd.

He's the great pastor. He's the great teacher of his people. He's your great pastor. He's your great teacher. And there's four great words for shepherding that are, I think, important for us, to know, to feed, to lead and to protect.

That's what a good shepherd does. He knows his sheep. John chapter 10, verse 14, you know this one, don't you? John chapter 10 verse, I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me.

So there's this great knowledge that he has of us, great care and compassion. In fact, more than that, there's also quite a solemn part to that in Matthew 25, I think, 32.

I've only got one or two more verses. He says he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. So there's those he knows and there will be those he don't know. And so there's quite a solemn element to his knowledge of us.

[16:31] I'm not a shepherd in any way, shape or form. I'm a city boy. But I'm added into a shepherding family and Katrina's family are shepherds. And Katrina's father is sadly no longer with us, but he was a lifelong shepherd.

And he does fantastic knowledge. You wouldn't you got I got a field and we're looking at a field of sheep and they all look the same to me. There's no difference. They're just sheep, you know, rather fat and woolly and white and they're all the same.

But I remember once we were on holiday with them in the borders and he's from the West Highlands of Scotland, he was from the West Highlands of Scotland. And we passed a field and he said, that was one of my sheep.

This was in the borders, long, long way away. He knew the sheep. That was one of mine. And they know, they know their sheep, but a shepherd knows his sheep.

There's this belonging. And for us as Christians, Jesus knows us and he loves us. And we've been redeemed by him and rescued by him.

[17:35] So he knows us. And because of that, he feeds us. We find the pasture spiritual feeding nourishment learning from him. Sam 23 speaks about leading us, you know, into pastures green.

He leads us where it's good and knowledge into knowledge that is important to nourish our souls into the truth of who he is. He feeds us and he leads us.

He leads us in the right places. He leads us in the right places. Sheep are easily led. I think that's one of the reasons why Jesus uses an illustration of Christians and the church.

And they will follow their leader. There's a leader usually in the flock, some are along the line. So quite often you'll see a long line of sheep, a straight line of sheep.

And there's one at the front and he's leading them. I don't know why he leads them. It's just because he's first. I don't know, but they all follow him and they don't seem to think very much about it. They just follow their leader.

[18:41] And it's important that we are led as Christians as well and that we follow Jesus Christ who is the right person to lead us. The right one to lead us. We're no different.

Because we're prone to wonder, have you ever watched one man and his dog? Have you ever seen that really annoying bit where there's the dog and there's three sheep? And all he needs to do is get the three sheep into the gate.

And he gets two in. And then one just wanders off on his own and will not just go the right way. And it's hugely frustrating for the shepherd. Prone to wonder, prone to be isolated, prone to be deceived, prone to drift into danger.

And as Christians, we're like that. We're prone to do these things and we need lead by the Lord Jesus in our lives. And all of these are fused together. The leading, the feeding, the knowing and the protecting.

The good shepherd will protect the sheep. As we've seen here, Jesus Christ does more than that. The great shepherd, he lays down his life for the sheep. Isaiah 40 speaks of him gently carrying the lambs close to his heart.

[ 19 : 52 ] The shepherding leading that is gifted to the church, it reflects the head of the church. It reflects Jesus himself. He is the head of the church.

And loving and learning are the two really important things that Jesus sees are needed for the church. Yet there was the foundation of the apostles and of the prophets. And we've seen that and we recognize that and the importance of that. And the evangelists to share the good news. And he also sees the significance and importance of having pastor teachers. Because the church and you and I as Christians need lead and we need shepherdhood. We're loved and we need to learn.

So he is the head and we are the body. And that is hugely significant. Who knows your body better than yourself? You know what your body needs, don't you?

[ 20 : 55 ] Sometimes you choose not to really follow what our body needs or listen to advice. But you often hear people saying that, well, how do you feel about things physically yourself? You know, you go to the doctor and they'll ask you, what do you think?

What do you feel yourself? Because you know you're on body and you have to somehow be able to tell the doctor if you're not well, what's going on? Well, Christ is the head of the church and he sees the church as his body.

And so he knows really what's great for us and what's important. And he says we need to be loving and we need to be learning. And so he gives us pastor teachers.

So Christ appoints pastor teachers to lead the church. And this is part of our DNA. He does that because like the great show, it's like Jesus and Matthew 9.

Where he sees the people and he says they're like sheep without a shepherd. He has compassion on them because they're like sheep without a shepherd. They're harassed and helpless without Him.

[ 21 : 58 ] And you know we are harassed and helpless without Jesus in our lives. And we need that spiritual DNA of loving and learning.

And we need the gifts of pastor teachers in the church to create and to lead and to guide in this loving and caring way.

That's hugely significant that we follow Jesus's example. So we need to love as we say before and be loved. There's this struggle in our lives.

We need encouragement. We need to be valued and cared for. We're often bruised and broken and insecure. And the church is to be a place where we are pastored.

Where we are warned, where protected, where we are loved. Where we are accountable, where we're corrected and rebuked in grace and gentleness. And the elder model is to allow that to happen throughout the church.

[ 23 : 06 ] We need to love and be loved and we need to learn and be learning. It's all interlinked. And learning for us is much, much more than simply intellectual knowledge.

For as it must always be more than that. More than just knowing about the Scripture. It's about being shepherded through the teaching of His living Word. And the centrality of the Word will always be important in the church.

Because that's where we are taught from. This is in the middle of the church. That's in the middle of the church. Because the Word of God and the Word preached and the Word shared is tremendously important.

Because we are learners. We're disciples as well as being those who need care. And the two are fused together. So good learning will mean that we oppose bad learning and false teaching. It means knowing our theology and knowing our doctrine because doctrine matters. It means being submissive to the teaching and to the eldership. As we recognize and know that we've got a communion next Sunday.

[ 24 : 11 ] And we're welcoming new members. And we ask them to take vows. And we ask them to recognize that we will pastor and care and love them as the elders and pastors of the church.

And that they will come under the teaching and submission of the spiritual leadership of the church. And there's that huge significance of protecting the church from error and from schism and division.

Loving and learning together is why God gives us this gift. And that's a great challenge for us as we consider our own place within the church. The part we play in the spiritual character formation of the church.

The body of people. Now we know it's massive, the church. You can speak about it. For intensive purposes, it's the body of believers that you belong to. We can resist being pastored and cared for. We can resist teaching and being taught. We can resist serving and being involved. But yet we see the significance and the importance that God has for these great characteristics in the church.

[ 25 : 21 ] Please remember those who are set apart with a specific gift. The elders within the church. The huge challenge that we have to recognize God's calling that we've been set apart by the church.

With this hugely significant task that we have. That we would fan and inflame the gifts that we've been given. And that we might work on the areas of the gifting that we have less of.

And that we are weaker on. And that we would pray for the Spirit to give us more of the gifts of shepherding. And of teaching as elders. But that all of us would recognize the caring, loving and learning.

Characteristic that should mark this church. And should mark every church as we seek to be on mission and in community. And maybe we want to share that message of Jesus.

Through supporting OM. Through the opportunities they provide. Through our day to day work and witness. And that this would be a place where people would recognize and see the reflection of Jesus.

[ 26 : 31 ] Who is the great shepherd, the great pastor and the great teacher. And that we would be those who come under that particular recognition and characteristic of Jesus.

And reflect that as his body is local. A local outworking of the body of Christ in Edinburgh here. So let's pray and consider that and ask for God's help.

Father God we ask and pray that you would help us, guide us, protect us. Forgive us when we fail to live up to the giftings that you have given us.

When we shrug our shoulders and say, well, nah, that's not for me. Or we simply, as Philip was saying earlier, shy away from the thought of evangelism.

Because we feel we can't do it. And yet we know that there's such a broad responsibility and privilege to bear all the fruits of the Spirit. Just in very ordinary ways.

[ 27 : 40 ] And recognize that there are those that are set apart. There are those that have gifts that we don't have. Yet we pray that together that we would share and cooperate and live as a people, as the body of Christ together.

Respecting, loving, supporting, praying for, caring for, and living out the gospel of Jesus Christ as His people. So bless as we pray.

Give us great opportunities to reflect care and love in our communities. To introduce our friends to our Christian community.

To help them to see why Jesus is real to us and why He has transformed our lives. And give us an excitement and a passion for this great chief shepherd of our souls, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Who has given us in Scripture the gifts that we need to live our Christian lives and to be in community. Forgive us when we so often seek to be isolated, to wander, to drift, to find ourselves in spiritually dangerous places.

[ 28 : 56 ] And may we know the warning signs and may we heed the gentle guidance of the loving hand of Jesus and of His people.

Keeping us, protecting us, praying for us, loving us, and drawing us to Himself. So help us in all of these things we ask and pray. And bless us in Jesus' name. Amen.