

The Pastor's Task and Goals

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Preacher: Pastor Kenoyer

[0 : 00] Great. That's the kind of things we ought to pray about all the time. Do you realize that? Listen to me carefully.! I think about the Psalm 73, where the Psalmist Asaph, he says this, who do I have in heaven but you?

And there is none that I desire beside you. I think about 1 Peter, where it says, I love this verse, whom having not seen you love, though now you see him not.

That's a mouthful. I don't see him yet, but I love him. And then it goes on and says, yet believing filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

I am convinced, and this is not the Ephesians passage, but it's applicable.

I am convinced that loving Christ is the bedrock.

[1 : 22] It is the genesis. It is the energy that we need for the growth and journey of life.

Would you agree with me? And here's the truth. We're not natural at that. And so, like Stephanie, we need to not only sing the song, but we need to pray the song.

Lord, draw me nearer. Well, I do want you to turn in your Bibles to Ephesians chapter 5. I said 5, and I meant 4.

Let's hope that that is the only error that I make this morning. Last week, I tried to add two extra books to the Bible, and I was gently rebuffed by one of our dear sisters, and I am very thankful for that, and I want you to know that.

I said that there are 29 books in the New Testament, and there really aren't. And so, I'm here. One of the things about newspapers is that they print their retractions like where?

[2 : 38] Page 9, column 4, somewhere in the middle of the page. Unfortunately, when pastors make errors, it is suitable that they do that at the beginning where they let you know they were wrong.

Do you understand that? And here's the reason why. Because I have the responsibility of always speaking the truth. And when I make a mistake, God forbid, but when I make a mistake, I owe it to the authority and the supremacy of the Word of God that I let you know that up front.

Now, saying 29, 27 is not a big thing, but we want to always be submissive to the authority and the accuracy of the Word.

Isn't that right? And so, if I teach it, then I have to model it, and that's why we begin this way. Let's read the passage of Scripture, and then we're going to pray together and ask that the Spirit of God would equip us to hear and apply His sweet truth.

Ephesians chapter 4, verse 12 and 13. Actually, I'll pick up in verse 11. That's where the thought begins. 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 the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

[4 : 08] Join me in prayer. Precious Father, for us, prayer is not something that we do out of habit, or because it's something that's kind of written into the order of our service.

It is something that we do because we are both desperately dependent upon You, and we are supremely confident in Your work and Your power in us through Your Spirit and through our humble dependence.

And so, like the psalmist, we would pray this morning, open our eyes that we might behold wondrous truths in Your law. And like Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians chapter 2, we are dependent upon Your Spirit, both me in the declaration of the truth, and then in the lives of Your people in applying it and understanding it and enjoying it and living in the light of the truth that You've given to us.

We pray that this morning as we study Your Scriptures, that our hearts would be lifted up to say with awe and reverence how great You are, how wise You are, how good You are, and how blessed we are to be Your children and be drawn together and put together into a body of believers for the glory and for the sufficiency of the testimony of Christ.

We ask, Lord, that as a result of our hearing the Word, that we would be different, that the undeniable effect of the Word of God would be seen in lives that are changed and lives that are growing in grace.

[5 : 44] And we ask this in Your precious name. Amen. I remember last week at one point in the sermon, I referenced the fact that Mark Dever summarized pastoral ministry by four little statements.

He said that pastoral ministry really comes down to preach and pray, love and stay. As I was thinking about this passage in particular and studying on it earlier, actually last week, I remember thinking about my ordination service.

And I don't remember exactly, I didn't look at the date, but I remember that after my ordination service, I was given the privilege of inviting two different men to preach, one who preached to me and the other who preached to the church.

And I asked my father to preach to me, and I asked Dr. Bill Brock, some of you are here who still remember his ministry, I asked Dr. Bill Brock if he would preach to the church.

My dad preached from a passage in Deuteronomy where Moses, as he was given that responsibility and burden of taking the nation of Israel into the promised land, across the wilderness, etc., he said, listen, I'm not going unless you show me your glory.

[6 : 57] You go with me. And he said, show me your glory. And I remember that sermon. I also remember Pastor Brock preaching. And he dealt with the responsibilities that I had as a pastor and the responsibilities that the church had to me as their pastor.

And I don't remember the particulars. I will tell you that I took notes, and I could pull those up and probably check those, but I would venture to say that knowing Pastor Brock and enjoying his ministry for the time that Judith and I were here before he took us up there to north, before God took us up there to northeastern Ohio, I have no doubt that he probably relied on a passage such as Acts 4, verse 42, where it says that this is what ministry consists of, in Acts 6, where the apostles said, but we will give ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word, and perhaps also on this passage that we're going to be looking at.

We're here, there, we're in this passage in Ephesians 4, verse 12 and 13, where the Spirit of God, after having explained how wonderful the work of Christ is in the church, he then brings it together in chapter 4, 5, and 6, and says, all right, since Christ has done this in your life, here's how you are to live.

And we are in the first part of those instructions for how the believers are to live together as a community. I remind you again that the tone or the individual that this passage is actually written to is not private individuals, but it's the body of Christ together.

And the starting place that the apostle has in these lessons for how believers are supposed to live is the matter of unity. Not just kind of acquiescing to one another and kind of getting along in a kind of Rodney King type of mindset, but really that genuine unity that comes about from all of us being under the same headship, namely under Christ.

[9 : 05] And in our lesson so far, we've understood that he gives to us spiritual gifts. We understood last week that he gives to you spiritual servants.

He gives to you gifted servants who are there for the sake of the body and for its effectiveness as Christ's instrument. Now, what we are looking at today in verse 12 and 13 is really a clear statement of what a pastor's job is to be.

And so let's open the text and follow along as we understand that, first of all, pastors are called to equip the saints. The text announced that a pastor teacher is responsible for an equipping business.

And given the importance of having a clear understanding of the word, this morning what I'm going to do here at the outset is I'm going to explain two particular words so that you are well informed.

And I want you to know that one of the benchmarks or the standards against which my ministry is to be judged is whether, first of all, I speak the word of God with accuracy depending on what God has revealed rather than my own personal ideas and interests.

[10:18] And secondly, that I speak it with clarity and help you understand exactly what it is that God says. I'm reminded of the fact that God intends for His people to understand the word.

I think that's a very, very important thing to have in mind. God intends for you to understand the word. It's vital to you. I think about the passage over in Deuteronomy chapter 30, verse 11 through 14, and just kind of fix that in your mind just for a moment where Moses, towards the end of his ministry, he says this about the word.

He says, the word is not far from you. Do you know what he means by that? He said, hey, you can get your hands around it. It's there for you. How many of you have had to deal with information that was really pretty fuzzy for you?

It's like, I don't get this. I don't understand this. You have to work real, real hard and it still kind of confuses you. When it comes to electrical schematics, Pastor Saul was a physicist and he worked in physics and blah, blah, blah.

And when we have electrical issues here at the church, we say, well, here, Pastor Saul, do this. And he's good with that. If it comes down to plumbing or carpentry, we call me out of the reserves. You know, okay, go.

[11:36] Water just runs downhill. Do you follow that? And it's not so complicated. But sometimes we deal with things we don't understand and that's not the way the Word of God is to be viewed.

He wants us to understand it and my job, among other things, is to make it understandable. God intends for his people to read the Bible and understand what it is saying.

I want you to have that fixed in your mind. He intends for you to be a people who know the Word. And part of my job is to encourage, encourage, encourage, encourage, keep on bumping you to make the Word significant and supreme and valuable, not just because it's the Word, but because it reveals to you the glory of Christ and the person of Christ and the reality and nature of God.

Do you follow me? How is it that we grow in loving Christ? It will not happen if you sit in a dark corner and go, mmm, it's not going to happen.

You are going to grow to love Christ by learning what the Scriptures tell you about Christ. It's the reason I would encourage you, if you're, boy, I don't love him like I should, I would encourage you to begin reading Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Matthew, Mark, why would I do that?

[13:01] You can't love somebody you don't know. Do you follow that? Read the Gospels. Read the Gospels. Read the Gospels. Go to the book of Hebrews. Read Hebrews.

Read the book of Revelation. Are they easy books? The answer is no. But they will be books that will enrich your affection for the Lord Jesus Christ and give you legs on which to stand when you work at loving him.

I want you to recognize that understanding and applying the Bible is really one of the principal means whereby we gain blessing from God. And so as we are studying this morning, we are going to see things that God intends for his body to understand about the role and the responsibility of a pastor.

And understanding that is really part of where the blessing comes from that man that God assigns to you to serve in that capacity. I want to say something here in relationship to this matter of understanding.

An uninformed believer is at a greater disadvantage than an illiterate citizen. An uninformed believer is at a greater disadvantage than an illiterate citizen.

[14:10] Now why would I say that? We value literacy. And that's a good thing. And having a literate congregation or having a literate nation or a literate community is important because being able to read and comprehend what is in print is a very, very valuable resource in the lives of individuals.

But let me say it again. An ill-informed believer is at a greater disadvantage than an illiterate citizen. And the reason is, is because economic and intellectual hardship is one thing.

Spiritual darkness and hardship is of a whole more significant nature. Now we're looking here at the issue of the responsibility of a pastor teacher and you mark there in verse 12, it says, to equip the saints.

The Greek word that Paul chose carries the idea of preparing someone and putting things in order so that the person is fully prepared to do their work.

It's not enough for a pastor just to kind of back the dump truck of truth up on the platform and pull the lever and let it all go. I have had two of my sons go into the military and neither I did not do it, but I will tell you that they both explained to me the experience of arriving at basic and having the process take place of turning them in from being just a yahoo to being actually part of the armed services.

[15:52] And it begins with little things like getting down to your skivvies, getting your head shaved, and then having people dump a whole bunch of stuff on your arms and out you walk. And you have everything you need in that pile.

Now what follows is they teach you all about all the things you have in your hands. And so equipping is not just shoving all that equipment out in a pile and saying, well, there it is, do what you want.

It is, this is your business and you are going to learn how to use all this stuff. I want you to understand that thankfully a pastor is not called to invent equipment or the training process.

The things that equip the saints are the Word of God. I want you to turn back. You're in Ephesians there. Actually turn forward just a little bit, but go to 2 Timothy chapter 3 verse 16 and 17.

2 Timothy chapter 3 verse 16 and 17. In relationship to what equips the believer, here's what it says in verse 16 and 17.

[17:03] All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness. Hey, listen. The Bible is your source book. It's your resource book.

It's what you need. It's the absolutely go-to document to help you with every aspect of life. And verse 17, that the man of God, you can put woman in there as well, may be competent, equipped for every good work.

Listen to me. The Bible's got the answers. And my job is to help you understand that, to remind you of it, to encourage you, to do everything within my power to encourage you to be a people whose first thought is, what does the Bible think?

Now, stop and realize that in our contemporary culture, when we have a question, what is the simplest place to go to get information on it? Say it loud. Google.

Google. I mean, hey, how many of you have said to somebody, Google it? How many of you have done that? Google it. You know what?

[18:14] Google cannot answer spiritual questions. And here's what it says in that passage in 2 Timothy 3, verse 17. It says that the man of God, you who know Christ, may be completely equipped that you have everything you need for handling the challenges of life.

It's in the Bible. The pastor is called to do more than just lecture, however. He is called to love the Word. He is called to know the Word.

And he's called to model the Word. And I rely upon that sequence of loving the Word and knowing the Word on the basis of what it says in Deuteronomy 6 when it encourages fathers in their responsibility of being the minister and shepherd of their home.

You know what it says? Love the Lord. Love the Lord. That's the starting point. And let these words that I say to you be in your heart and then teach them. I want you to recognize that a pastor is called to love the Word.

He is called to model the Word. And those things go together and make for a difference in ministry. Listen to what Paul had to say to his son in the faith, Timothy, who was serving as a pastor in a congregation there at Ephesus.

[19:27] You're in 2 Timothy. Just go back a little bit to 1 Timothy 4, verse 12. Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.

You know what Paul's saying? He's saying, Timothy, I want you to understand that one of the essential elements in your ministry is that you are an example of what you preach.

And that's true. Pastoral ministry is different in some senses from many other different kinds of professions. You may be an excellent surgeon and an absolute wretch in your moral life.

Do you understand that? You may be a great carpenter, and you may be an absolute failure in your spiritual walk. You may be the most wonderful mathematician or scientist or lawyer, and you win every case, but the truth of the matter is your profession and your practice may not necessarily be linked together and require that what you say and what you do match.

That is not the case in pastoral ministry. I'll never forget early on in ministry when Dr. David Moore said to me, Tim, he said, character is the only coin you have.

[21 : 01] Very interesting statement, and I thought about that a long time because at that moment in my life, I wasn't thinking about coins. So I had to kind of squeeze the poetry out of it, and what he was saying is this, is that your character is at the heart of what you do.

And here is Paul making this statement. He says, let no man despise your youth, but set the believers an example. In other words, you are a living illustration of what you preach.

1 Timothy 4, verse 16, there follows on that same frame. He says, but if you're going to take care of your exampleship, keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching.

Persist in this, for in doing so, you will save both yourself and your hearers. What's he saying? Hey, listen. At the heart of pastoral ministry is, first of all, you take care of your own walk before the Lord. You take care of your own walk before the Lord. Many, many years ago, and I don't know exactly why, but I made a commitment that I would not have devotions in the same passage that I was going to study in that week or the week to follow or the week after that.

[22 : 10] I have always had devotions in a portion of the Scripture that has not been directly related to what I plan to preach at the moment. Now, having said that, one of the things that I, a number of years ago, began doing is in preparation for a book that I had settled in my heart that I was going to read or I was going to preach.

I would begin reading that book, sometimes daily, the book of Ephesians. I read pretty much every day for about five, six months. But as I was reading it, I was reading it to understand Ephesians and its application to me.

I was not reading it for the sake of preaching, and I did not make notes for the sake of preaching. Right now, I'm in the process. I'm in my seventh month. I'm almost finished with my seventh month of reading through the book of John.

Does that tell you where we're going eventually? We're going to the book of John, okay? And I got to tell you, there are times when I am reading the book of John, and I think I can't wait. But I do it like Ephesians.

Here's the deal. If the Word of God is not making a difference in my life, it won't make much difference in yours. And I have to preach with an affection and a passion.

[23 : 23] That comes from having time in the Word and understanding its value. So to understand what the word equip means, let's put it this way.

The pastor teacher is called to use the Word of God to first shape his own life and then teach it to fellow believers so they can do their divine work. Appropriate ministry with the Word is first of all, letting it affect you and then secondly, having it affect other people.

And that's important. Now let's talk secondly about another word that appears in the passage. And so go back, if you would, to the book of Ephesians. We were there in the Timothy.

So let's go back to Ephesians chapter 4 and look there. If you would, at verse 11, it says, or 12, it says, to equip who? Who are we equipping? Saints.

Okay. Well, let's explain how the Bible uses this word. And so as I think about this, let me introduce several saints to you. I don't know that you actually realize that they're here this morning, but I'm absolutely certain that we have saints in our midst this morning, okay?

[24 : 40] Isaac Malumba, would you stand just for a moment, please? This young man is Saint Isaac Malumba. Sit down, please.

Mrs. Cassandra Bach, would you stand, please? I'm sorry to embarrass you, sister. This is a saint in our fellowship. Have a seat. I'm not going to ask the next one to stand because once you reach 90, you're okay.

You don't have to stand. Okay. But my mother is 91. She is a saint. This is Saint Marlia. We have Saint Isaac. We have Saint Cassandra. Isaac and Cassandra came to know the Lord this last year, right?

In this year. And they are saints. You know, when we think about saints, we have a tendency to think about people that, I mean, you know, they do the heavy lifting for us all spiritually, right?

The truth of the matter is, let me explain this, and I don't mean to embarrass Isaac or Cassandra, my mother, if she'll tell me later, don't do that to me again. But here's the deal.

[25 : 44] Let's explain what the word means. The Bible uses the word saint really to mean one who's set apart, one who is holy by virtue of what Christ has done for him.

And it points to the fact that someone who has come to faith in Christ is a person who's been set apart by grace. It would seem that one of the reasons Paul and other writers in the New Testament

chose to use the word saint when they were talking about believers was to remind those who were believers, Christians, that they had this wonderful relationship by virtue of what Christ had done for them.

And the truth of the matter is, is that we are all equally, once we've come to know Christ, we are all equally saints before the Lord Jesus. Jesus, if we limit ourselves to the logic of the Bible.

Now, why would I say if we limit ourselves to the logic of the Bible? What is the safety of limiting yourself to the logic of the Bible? Does anybody have, don't have to raise your hand and say, I know, I know, but what is the safety of limiting ourselves to the logic of the Bible?

That's the question. Here's the answer. The logic of the Bible is absolutely reliable. The logic of Tim Kenoyer, or for that matter, any one of our deacons, or Pastor Saul, is marked and is affected by the noetic effect of the fall.

[27 : 12] What's that noetic word mean? It just means that our knowledge got messed up in the fall. How many of you realize that? How many of you, while you were debating doing a sin, thought it was a pretty smart idea?

Raise your hand. Come on. Every one of you. Every one of you have at one point or another thought that the sin you were thinking about committing, whether it was getting snarky with someone who had been unkind to you, right?

They had it coming. Or honking your horn at somebody that wasn't moving fast enough. They need to be divinely prodded. You know, there are all kinds of excuses that we have. When we're thinking about the sin, we think it's pretty smart.

And then the Spirit of God comes along and taps us on the shoulder and uses a little Bible verse and says something such as the fact that, you know, the wrath of man does not work the right...

Oh, yeah. Sorry. My mind, on its own, does not do well with reality scripturally. The Spirit of God uses the Word of God and keeps me in companionship with godly people and helps me do a better job of it.

[28 : 16] Now, here we are. We want to be a people who are informed by the Scriptures. And so, when we look at the Bible, we see that the term saint refers to everyone who has come to genuine faith in Christ.

And so, what you are thinking right now where you're sitting is this. Here it is. You don't need to say it out loud, but I hope you're thinking this thought. Prove it to me. Is that what you're thinking?

Pastor, can you prove that?

Well, yes, I can. Here we go. We're going to look at a couple different places where in the Bible it refers to people as saints. And it's not talking about people who have kind of arrived, but it's talking about usans, you and me.

Go to your Bible. Turn to 1 Corinthians 1, verse 2. We're dealing with the reality that in the Scriptures every believer who has come to faith is addressed by the title saint.

1 Corinthians 1, verse 2. To the church of God that is in Corinth to all those sanctified in Christ, Jesus called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours.

[29 : 26] Let's go to 1 Corinthians or 2 Corinthians 1, verse 1. And by the way, what kind of church was Corinth? Of all the churches in the New Testament, it was the one that was filled with the nicest people, the people who had the least problem with sin.

No, no, no, no, no. That's not true. Okay. First, 2 Corinthians 1, verse 2. To the church of God that is at Corinth with all the saints who are in the whole of Achaia. Now, I could just rattle on, have you go to Ephesians 1, to Philipians 1, to Colossians 1, and what you will recognize is that the church commonly was referred to by the title saint.

The saints. The saints. So, here we are with the saints in Maranatha Baptist Church and you're thinking to yourself, well, there are some people here who are not very saintly and I'm sure you're referencing yourself, not other people.

I do want you to understand that when the Bible refers to us as saints, it is not talking about us as having reached a certain plateau of spirituality and having extra lifting power so we could be of help to other people.

It's just talking about the fact that we are those who've come to Christ. Now, are there saints in heaven? The answer is yes, but they're in heaven by virtue of having been saved through the grace of God and then death taking them to that place.

[30 : 58] Saints are not people who have a special section in the church. or have extra ability to pray. People come and say, Pastor, would you pray for me? I want you to know I'm happy to pray for you, but I do want you to know this.

My prayer doesn't count any more in God's eyes than your prayer does. Why is that? We are equally saved by the grace of God and we have the same privilege of access into His presence. So I want you to understand that a saint just refers to an individual who's a believer. Probably one other argument that we would undeniably have to admit helps us understand that saints are just people like us is that Paul writes here in chapter 4, verse 12 to equip the saints.

If saints have arrived spiritually, do you need to do any further education and equipping? What's the answer? You wouldn't have to if they'd already been there and done that.

Secondly, I want you to understand that saints are called to do the work of ministry to mature and manifest Christ.

[32 : 03] The Bible makes it clear that the primary duty of the pastor teacher is to equip the saints. But why? Here's the key. Because the saints are to be equipped so they are effective in doing the work of ministry.

ministry. Those who have known me for a long time have heard me say on many occasions that my job is to help you do your job. That's it. My job is to help you do your job.

To encourage you to do your job. To explain how that your job should be done, etc. And at the heart of what the expectation of Scripture is is that those who are called to be pastor teachers are actively engaged in preparing, encouraging, education, educating, and leading people towards doing the things that they've been called by God to do.

There is no indication in Scripture that God ever intended for ministry or more specifically the responsibility of ministry to be done by a select few.

The work of ministry is to be done by all the members of the body of Christ. And to this end, each member has been given spiritual gifts and it is towards this end that the pastor teacher is actively engaged in equipping, encouraging, strengthening them so they'll be active in doing the things that they've been called to do.

[33 : 31] The members of his body are to be at work and we're looking at the passage in Ephesians 4, verse 12. It says here, Ephesians 4, to equip the saints for the work of ministry for building up the body of Christ.

Now verse 13 then gives a little more explanation of what it means to build up the body and I'm going to press that together for you and have you recognize. Number one, building up the body means coming to the unity of faith.

Coming to the unity of faith. Shepherding aims at unity that comes from understanding and holding common truths of the Scripture. The divisions of the church at Corinth were the result of people that did not hold to the same truths.

When you find people that are of radically different perspectives on truth, guess what happens? Invariably, some of you sitting out here might be conservative in your political theology and you work with people who are right next to you who are liberal in their perspective and what happens when you try to have conversations?

Goes pretty well, doesn't it? You talk to them about your fiscal frugality and how you think that, you know, blah, blah, blah and what happens?

[34 : 49] It devolves into a spitting match at best. Why is that? Because there is no unity of faith. There's no core that the two of you hold to together.

And so Paul explains, he says, listen, the responsibility of the pastor-teacher is to build up the body and the way that happens is bringing about unity of faith and when it says faith, it's just not talking about, well, having some kind of abstract, I got faith.

It's talking about the faith, the truth, the truth. And so it's no accident that on Sunday evenings we are committed to doctrinal teaching of some of the essential truths of the Scripture and the reason we're doing that is we want unity in our fellowship and strength that comes about from having that cohesive relationship one with another around common truth.

Secondly, we find there in the passage it says also coming to the knowledge of the Son of God. The word for knowledge that Paul uses here is a word that refers to a deep and accurate understanding of something and in essence it means this, having an intimate relationship with Christ.

It's not enough just to know the facts about Jesus. Now I'll say that carefully. It is not enough to just know the facts about Jesus. Why is that? Well, you want a Bible answer don't you?

[36 : 10] Say yes. Yes. You always want a Bible answer. What does it say in the book of James? It says you believe there is one God you do well the demons what? The demons believe.

Has that done them any good and what's the answer? Knowing the facts is not what this is talking about. It is talking about knowing the truth but then having that truth boil out into a personal genuine relationship that's marked by affection and by an attachment.

Shepherds aim at heart affection for Christ and a desire to please Him. Let me say that again slowly. Shepherds aim at heart affection for Christ and a desire to please Him.

Oh, my prayer is that God would deliver people from the hollowness of an intellectual comprehension of Christ that is absolutely devoid of affection.

That's important. Now, are there days where our affections are a little dampened by circumstances? Yes.

[37 : 24] But, beloved, listen to me carefully and I want you to think with me about this. If there is in your life a persistent lack of affection for Christ, there's something wrong.

Why would I say that? John chapter 21. Don't go there but remember Jesus, one of the last things that He said, He pulled Peter aside. Remember Peter was the guy who really messed up and denied him three times, right?

And so, Jesus pulls him aside and He says, Hey, Peter, do you what? Do you love me? Yeah. You know that I love you. Well, then feed my sheep. Do you love me?

You know all things. Feed my sheep. See, very interesting, at the heart, at the foundation, at the base of what Paul was calling Peter to do was his heart's affection for Christ.

over in Revelation, as the Lord Jesus wrote to one of the churches, He says this, I have something against you because you have lost your first love.

[38 : 40] And so, shepherding aims at heart affection for Christ and a desire to please Him. Finally, shepherding aims at growing mature and Christ-like believers.

You look there in verse 13, it says, the knowledge of the Son of God to mature manhood to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Behind the work of any pastor who is faithful is an unrelenting dependence upon three agents to do their work in the life of a believer.

And let me just rattle these off. One is the power of the Word of God. Pastor Saul referenced it this morning when he referred to the passage in 2 Corinthians 3, verse 18, where it said this, we, beholding His glory, are transformed from glory to glory.

Do you know what it's saying? It's saying that the more we know about Jesus, the more we become like Him. And that's at the heart of pastoral ministry. I want you to know more about Jesus.

I want you to love Him more. I can't make that happen, but I can encourage you. I can model it. I can draw you to the Word of God and say, listen, He who has saved you is worthy of your infinite affection, and someday when you're in heaven, you are just going to be beyond yourself with delight and satisfaction seeing Him.

[40 : 03] And here in this life, you should be growing in your interest in the person of Christ. Secondly, the power of the Spirit of God.

Three agents that help you in this growth process. One's the power of the Word of God. Second is the power of the Spirit of God. 2 Corinthians 3, verse 18, again, the very last part of the verse, says, talking about the fact that it's the Lord, the Spirit of God that does this work in you.

And one of the ways that you engage and involve the Spirit of God is by pleading with Him to do it.

And so if you're sitting here this morning and the truth of the matter is your heart is cold towards Christ, what I would ask you to do is suck it up and say, hey, listen, I'm a mess, do something.

I think sometimes we're afraid to do that. I've been debating why that is. And I'm not fully convinced that the reason we're afraid to do it is because we're afraid of what He will do.

That's not it. I think we're afraid that we'll come off the little throne we have established for ourselves. At the heart of our hesitancy is self-idolatry.

[41 : 22] Lord, I don't want to pray and ask you to do whatever it takes. By the way, would He ever do anything nasty and wicked and harsh to you?

And what's the answer? He can't do it because He's God. Every stroke from His hand is marked by His love. And I would ask you, plead with Him, man, I want to know who Jesus is.

I want to be changed by that knowledge. The third agent that God uses is the people of God.

The people of God. Acts chapter 4, verse 32.

The people of God. Hey, you want to be a floater? Do you know what I mean by a floater? This morning, after the morning service, I'm going to talk to Tim and Julia.

[42 : 30] I am embarrassing you, Tim, ahead of time, so where are you? Raise your hand. Wave at me. Tim and Julia are going to get married sometime in the distant future. It's actually around February, am I right?

And one of the things I'm going to say to this lovely young couple and Tim is on my bad side because he moved away to get a job. I don't understand this but I'm glad. I love you anyway. But one of the things I'm going to say to Tim and Julia is that next to the relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, marriage can be the most wonderful experience this side of glory.

but it takes work. It takes work. It takes work. You have to pursue relationship with the other person. You have to be willing to humble yourself. You have to be willing to invest in that process over and over and over again. And so my plea with you this morning would be this, that as you think about what a pastor is to do, you understand that my divine appointment, it is not something that I arbitrarily chose.

It is not a career path. Tim Knoyer and anybody that ever occupies this pulpit better be able to say I was called by God to serve as a shepherd.

[43 : 51] And my calling is to equip you to do the work that Christ has called you to. Let's close in prayer.

Precious Father, we are thankful that you in your glorious wisdom have given to us the Lord Jesus Christ. And in your wisdom you have drawn us together and you have fit us in to being the body of Christ.

And you intend for the body to work for the glory of Christ. There are some of us here this morning, Lord, who have allowed the enemy of our souls to rob us of the joy and the significance that comes from being engaged in that work.

And for those, I would plead this morning that you would bring them to repentance, repentance, to restitution and reconciliation that they would know the full sweetness that comes with actively and being involved in the bride of Christ.

And I have no doubt that there are some here today, Christ, that do not know you as their Savior.

And it would be my plea that this morning, even with the preaching of the Word of God, that their heart would be burdened and miserable with the sin of their soul and they would understand that there is nothing they can do to remedy that burden except to cry out in broken humility and say, I stand morally bankrupt before a holy God and I have no hope of an eternal destiny in heaven apart from what Christ did when He died on the cross and I plead with you to save me.

[45 : 45] And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.