

## LESSON 1

### THE PASTOR'S QUALIFICATIONS FOR AN EFFECTIVE PULPIT MINISTRY

#### Introduction

Although preaching is not the only ministry of the pastor, it is his primary task. His position of leadership requires that he give oversight to the entire programme of the church, and his time is divided among several ministries. Therefore, the pastor's major role of proclaiming the Word of God will be neglected unless he has a proper attitude towards his pulpit ministry.

Administrative responsibilities require the pastor to give supervision to other staff members and teachers, to see that the church has sufficient funds to meet its needs, to lead in planning and maintaining adequate building facilities, and to develop an effective educational programme. As shepherd of the flock, he is called upon frequently to counsel individuals or families during times of crises. His presence and assistance are needed during both joyful and sorrowful experiences of his parishioners. The pastor's pulpit and counselling ministries should complement one another. He is required also to be an evangelist. His evangelistic responsibilities are similar to those of the other members of the church. However, the development of an evangelistic church depends on his faithfulness in doing the work of an evangelist and training others to share their faith. Again, this ministry should complement his pulpit ministry.

Perhaps the ministry most neglected by the modern pastor is that of teaching. Paul referred to pastors as teachers (Eph. 4:11f.). This ministry should be met partially through didactic preaching and in the church school. In addition, the pastor should give individual attention to the teaching (training) of church members for the work of the ministry.

With the many ministries demanding attention from the pastor, it is easy for his pulpit ministry to be neglected. A pastor must learn to plan carefully the use of his time and to follow a schedule if his pulpit ministry is to be complementary to his other ministries. Proper planning will depend largely on the attitude and understanding the pastor has towards his work.

*What is the major task of the pastor?*

\_\_\_\_\_

*(Compare your answer with the text.)*

*Read the second and third paragraphs of the text. Then list four other areas of a pastor's ministry.*

1. *A* \_\_\_\_\_
2. *C* \_\_\_\_\_
3. *E* \_\_\_\_\_
4. *T* \_\_\_\_\_

*(Administration, Counselling, Evangelism, Teaching)*

*List two things the pastor can do to be sure he has adequate time for his pulpit ministry.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

*(1. plan his time carefully, 2. follow a schedule)*

To be qualified for the work of the ministry, a pastor must possess spiritual gifts and certain other qualifications. He needs theological convictions and adequate understanding of the task to which he has been called if he is to be effective.

### Divine Call

Vocation originally meant a summons or a call to a course of action. The meaning implied that someone called and expected a response to the call by a commitment to action. A person should choose the ministry as a vocation only if he is selected divinely for the task.

The Bible deals with "the call" primarily in relation to redemption. From the time of Abraham, men were "called out" from the world to become set apart for redemptive purposes. Israel was "called out" of Egypt to a special task. In the New Testament, all Christians were called and had their vocations in relation to God's redemptive plan. The *ekklesia* (church) is a "called out" group. In making the body of Christ complete and adequate to fulfill its purpose, each member is called to an individual responsibility within the church. According to Paul, every Christian experiences a call from above, and his responsibility is to live a life worthy of his calling (cf. Rom. 11:29; Phil. 3:14; 2 Thess. 1:11; Eph. 1:18; 4:1; 4:4; 2 Tim. 1:9).

The divine call is God's inviting the soul to turn from itself to Him. Life comes from God and is sustained by Him; therefore, a person is responsible to live his life according to God's plan. Jeremiah described his own call as the Word of God coming unto him saying: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations" (Jer. 1:5—NASB). Paul spoke of himself as a "bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God" (Rom. 1:1—NASB). He referred to the Roman Christians as "beloved of God, called saints" (Rom. 1:7—a literal translation). Paul's call to be an apostle was of God, not his own choosing. At the time of his conversion, it was made known that he was a chosen vessel to bear the name of Christ to Gentiles, kings, and Israelites (Acts 9:15).

The Church is the called servant of Christ with the responsibility of sharing the gospel with all the world. The accomplishment of the one task requires many functions. Within the church individual members are called to special types of ministry. Paul considered that his own special calling was to function as an apostle to the Gentiles. Other ministerial functions listed in 1 Corinthians 12:28-31,

The original meaning of vocation was a \_\_\_\_\_ or a \_\_\_\_\_ to a course of action.

(Compare your answer with the text.)

Underline the correct word.

Paul indicated that God calls (some, every-  
one).

(everyone)

The responsibility of the Church is to \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ with all the \_\_\_\_\_.

(share, gospel, world)

Romans 12:6-8, and Ephesians 4:11-12 include:

1. prophets who receive their message from God and are responsible for proclaiming it;
2. pastor-teachers who are responsible for equipping saints for the work of the ministry;
3. workers of powers whose primary ministry is the casting out of evil spirits by the power of God;
4. healers who help those with physical ailments;
5. helper-contributors who use their special business abilities for God's glory by sharing accumulated possessions through various social ministries;
6. administrators who give guidance to the church;
7. speakers in tongues who can contribute to the church if interpreters are present;
8. assistants in service who aid and support the needy by the distribution of alms by charitable giving;
9. exhorters who prophesy and call for decision;
10. leaders who influence others by their own examples;
11. workers of mercy who help others during times of distress;
12. evangelists who share the good news with the lost.

The modern-day pastor is required to perform a number of the functions listed in the New Testament. According to Scripture, it was not expected in New Testament days that one man would be responsible for all the different ministries. As leader of the church, the pastor was required to be a teacher who trained the members for the work of the ministry, that is, to carry on the different functions. Based on the examples of New Testament times, a pastor should have gifts of the Spirit which qualify him for teaching and preaching. According to Acts 2, every Christian is given the Holy Spirit who qualifies him to evangelize. The pastor may or may not be called by God to function in the other ministries. His pulpit ministry

*See how many functional ministries of the Church you can write. Then compare your list with the text.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_

*Based on New Testament examples, a pastor should have gifts of the Spirit which qualify him for \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(teaching, preaching)*

is vital in the development of the saints for the work of ministry.

Since the function of the pastor relates to the total body, the church should participate in the interpretation of his call. God's Spirit makes known also to the church community His call of certain men to particular ministries. In Acts 13, the call of Saul and Barnabas came through the group during worship. The men had been teachers in the church at Antioch. Since other qualified teachers could carry on the work there, Saul and Barnabas were separated to carry the gospel into new areas. There should be an individual conviction concerning the call, but there should be a recognition that God's call of a man to the pastoral ministry is revealed also to the church. The church should recognize the spiritual gifts of the called.

### Spiritual Gifts

Every Christian receives the gift (*dorean*) of the Spirit when he is born into the Kingdom of God (cf. John 3:3-5; Acts 2:38). The indwelling Spirit, whom a person receives in the new birth, bestows gifts (*charismata*—gifts freely given, bestowed grace) to qualify him for a particular ministry. A Christian does not choose the particular spiritual gifts to be given him. The Spirit "works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills" (1 Cor. 12:11—NASB).

For a person to select a functional ministry for which he has not been qualified by a spiritual gift is disastrous for both himself and the church. His function within the church is to be for the benefit of the total body; therefore, if he is not qualified spiritually for the function, the entire church suffers. There is always danger that men will seek an area of ministry for which they have not been qualified with spiritual gifts. Sin causes every son of Adam to be drawn more towards the prominent and sensational ministries than the lowly and menial tasks. The pastor occupies a prominent position as the leader who stands before the group. Many men aspire to the position of prominence and authority over others which the pastoral role offers. A person should take care not to choose that functional ministry unless he has been given grace for it "according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (Eph. 4:7).

Paul stated that after Christ ascended He gave gifts to men. This statement of the bestowing of gifts follows Paul's entreaty for men to walk worthy of the calling to which they are called (Eph. 4:1, 4). There are numerous gifts. However, there is one Spirit who preserves the unity of the body and who equips the different members of the body for the work of service, "to the building up of the body of Christ"

*With reference to God's call of a man to be a pastor, there should be--*

- 1. a conviction of call by the \_\_\_\_\_;*
- 2. recognition that God's call is revealed to the \_\_\_\_\_ also.*

*(individual, Church)*

*Spiritual gifts which qualify a Christian for a particular ministry are given by the \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(Spirit)*

*A person should be careful in choosing to become pastor of a church and be sure he has been given that particular s \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(spiritual gift)*

(Eph. 4:12—NASB). The calling to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers is described as the giving of God's grace: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets ... " (Eph. 4:11). The special call to a particular ministry is synonymous with the bestowing of gifts to qualify one for the work of that ministry. Accomplishments in spiritual ministries are the results of divinely-bestowed spiritual gifts and not of personal achievements.

Paul spoke of the different gifts, services, and activities of the church (1 Cor. 12:4-6). The spiritual gifts qualify individual members for services and activities in order to benefit all the members. The qualifying spiritual gifts are not distinguished sharply from the functional ministries described as "services" and "activities." Apparently the spiritual gift of the "word of wisdom" relates to the work of prophecy. The "word of knowledge" relates directly to the activity of teaching. It appears that each ministerial function (service or activity) is accompanied by a qualifying gift of the Spirit.

Spiritual gifts are different from abilities, but the two are related also. The same Spirit designs each person from birth for a particular task (designs his abilities) and bestows spiritual gifts to qualify one to accomplish God's work. Spiritual gifts should not be equated with abilities since the unregenerate, who have not received the Spirit, also have abilities. Man can accomplish works in this world by utilizing abilities, but spiritual works require spiritual gifts for success. However, the indwelling Spirit does use the mental and physical abilities of the body of the regenerate person to accomplish the will of God.

It is the indwelling Spirit of God who accomplishes spiritual ministries through the lives of the called. It is a mistake for a person to choose a pulpit ministry if he has not been called to that function. If he has been called, he should "stir up the gift [*charisma*] of God," which Paul connected with the laying on of his hands (2 Tim. 1:6). Paul charged Timothy to "exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2). Timothy was also instructed to do the work of an evangelist (2 Tim. 4:5).

### Personal Convictions

#### The pastor's concept of the importance of the ministry

Most modern cities' skylines reveal that religious institutions are a part of the structure of their society. Millions of dollars are spent annually to support various religious movements. A traveller cannot help but be impressed by the elaborate and

*Is this statement true or false?*

*The call to a particular ministry and the bestowing of gifts to qualify one for a ministry are not synonymous. \_\_\_\_\_*

*(false)*

*Underline the correct phrase.*

*Spiritual gifts (are the same as, are different from) abilities.*

*Is this statement true or false?*

*An unregenerate man can accomplish works in this world by using abilities, but spiritual works require spiritual gifts for success.*

*(Compare your answers with the text.)*

expensive buildings which have been constructed as places of worship. During most of the week, however, the buildings are vacant. The amount of time they are used may vary from two to ten hours each week. Since a week has 168 hours in it, the expensive facility is in use only a small percentage of the time that it is available. The few hours of the facility's use are very valuable, from both economical and spiritual perspectives. The preacher should sense from these investments the importance of the hours of worship. Such investments are not modern innovations but reveal the value of religion to man since his beginning. Although many are unaffected by religious institutions and pacify their religious cravings with substitutes, others find that religion is essential to life. Each day of worship finds hundreds and thousands assembled in an effort to satisfy spiritual hunger. Each group looks to its leader for a worship experience which is meaningful.

Although the minister may conceive of his job as requiring a 40-hour week, which is divided among the various ministries, he should remember that he is the steward of the time of those who come to worship. An hour of his time given to leading the worship service is multiplied many times by those who come and depend on him to make that hour profitable. Perhaps many more would be present if they felt that what was offered in the worship service was worthwhile and vital. Too frequently people attend the worship services out of habit, but they go away without having experienced anything that will strengthen their lives.

Although the facilities may be elaborate and the staff extensive, the value of the religious institution depends on the spiritual food and vital teachings offered therein. The pulpit is not the only place in a church from which the Word of God is spoken; however, it is the central point of proclamation. Neither should the conclusion be made that the only aspect of religious experience is hearing the preached Word of God. The Bible and practical experience agree, however, that the teaching and preaching of God's Word are primary.

The religious experience includes the total man. Truth speaks to the intellectual part of man. Doctrines are directed towards man's intellect. Truth is more than theoretical knowledge and is expected to give guidance to a person's life. The person who follows God's Word expects life to be meaningful, satisfying, and victorious in the pursuit of ultimate aspirations. People attend worship services in order to discover ultimate reality, but often truth is presented poorly and vaguely. It is the task of the minister to know what truth is and to be able to set it forth clearly. To do so requires the pastoral leader's full time and diligent pursuit.

*Evidences of the importance of the preaching ministry to people are:*

1. Their investment of \_\_\_\_\_ in places of worship;
2. Their dependence on the \_\_\_\_\_ to make their worship experiences meaningful.

*(money, pastor)*

*The value of a religious institution depends on the \_\_\_\_\_ and vital \_\_\_\_\_ offered therein.*

*(spiritual food, teachings)*

*What is the one thing a pastor must know and be able to set forth clearly? \_\_\_\_\_*

*(truth)*

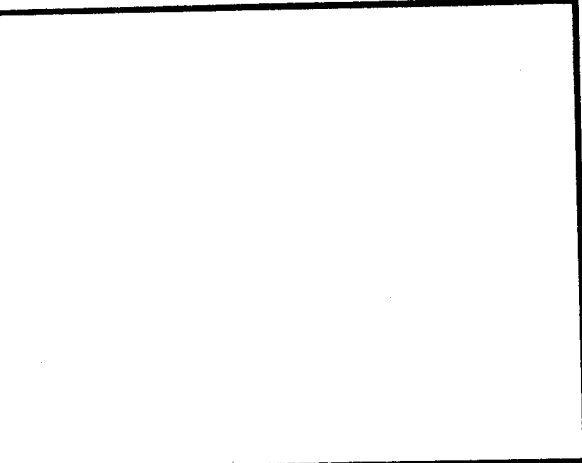
When 100 people are willing to trust two hours of their time on Sunday to the pastor's guidance in their search for truth and worship, the pastor becomes responsible for 200 man-hours that day. More important than the hours involved are the lives of the people who come in search of God. If he does not understand clearly the truth of God himself, he cannot share the Word of God effectively with others. Even though he understands the Word of God, he may fail to communicate it in a way that is clear to others. It is important, therefore, that the pastor make adequate personal preparation for his primary role of communicating the Word of God.

The pastor's belief about man's nature

The diligence given to preparation will depend on the pastor's convictions concerning the importance of his task. So much emphasis has been placed on the material side of man's life that the spiritual is usually minimized or neglected. It is obvious when man's physical body has serious needs, which are caused by sickness, injury, or poverty. It is not always as obvious when his soul is in a parallel spiritual condition.

A continuing struggle of mankind has been to determine the relation of soul and body. Man's body relates him to physical existence. His five senses of smell, sight, touch, taste, and hearing enable him to apprehend and relate to the physical world but not to the higher spiritual existence. Man's nature as a spiritual being requires that his physical existence have meaning and purpose, which reach beyond daily existence into eternity. As a spiritual being, man wants to know if life's fullness and satisfaction are found in possessions and pleasures or in the spiritual virtues of serving others (love) and denying self in order to serve and worship God (the life of faith). If man's ultimate goal is possessions and physical pleasures, then death ends his experience by laying aside the body, which returns to the dust of the earth. If man's existence goes beyond the physical and survives death, then there must be a transcendent, spiritual dimension to his present life. Which should control his daily activities, his physical desires or his spiritual dimension? People attend worship services in search of an answer to this question. Others would come if they thought they would receive an answer, while others refuse to come because they think they already have the answer.

The seriousness with which a minister approaches his task depends on his conviction concerning the nature of man's existence. The critical experiences of sickness and death prevent man from ignoring the question of the nature of his existence. The Word of God contains definite answers concerning the question of ultimate existence. The task of the preacher is to set



*Underline which needs are usually less obvious.*

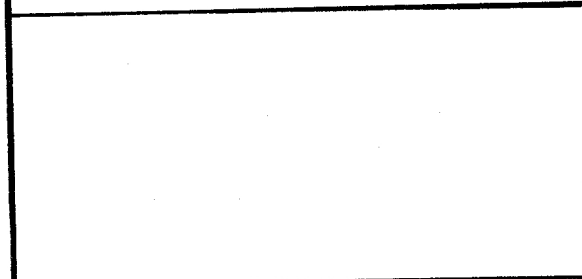
*man's spiritual needs*

*man's physical needs*

*(man's spiritual needs)*

*The continuing struggle of mankind is to determine the relation of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(soul, body)*



*A pastor's conviction regarding the nature of \_\_\_\_\_ will be revealed in his pulpit ministry.*

*(Compare your answer with the text.)*

forth those answers in a way that is true to God's Word and understandable to the people who come seeking a Word from the Lord.

The Bible teaches that man is both spiritual and physical. The spiritual is his higher nature, which is made in the image of his Creator who is spirit. The physical nature is the structure through which his spiritual being is expressed. Therefore, the body is vital to man's existence, but it is the servant of his higher nature. Although the deterioration of the body is of great concern, it does not mean the cessation of man's spiritual nature. The Christian message is that God will provide a heavenly body, which will transcend the limitations of the physical body that is corruptible.

Since man's existence is more than physical, the way he lives in relation to material existence is affected by his view of the totality of his being. The task of the preacher is to help man to understand the relation of his ultimate and eternal existence to created material and to the Creator who transcends the material.

#### His view of the purpose of the pulpit ministry

Young and inexperienced ministers have difficulty in keeping the purpose of their preaching in proper perspective. Some become engrossed in the principles of homiletics and spend more time on the impressiveness of the outline than on the accuracy of the meaning of the Scripture and its application to the lives of the hearers. The good formal structure of a sermon cannot compensate for its inferior content. However, accurately interpreted content expressed in beautiful form does contribute to effective preaching. The purpose of homiletical structure is to help set forth the truth. God was pleased to choose the foolishness of preaching (*kerygmatos*) to set forth the message of the Cross to save those who believe (1 Cor. 1:21, 23). The *kerygma* includes the content of the message and the method of communicating it.

A sermon outline should not be dramatic or sensational. Its purpose is to organize and to simplify the truth of the message in order that the people will understand and remember it. To twist the content of the Bible to fit a flashy outline or a sensational subject misses the purpose of preaching. Those who believe that effective sermon outlines and titles must be stated in sensational terms usually let them degenerate into trite, vulgar, and sensational statements. The title and major points of a sermon should be fresh and interesting but not cheap and sensational. Illustrations of such inappropriate titles are:

"Seven Ducks in a Muddy Pond"

Definite answers concerning questions of ultimate existence are found in the \_\_\_\_\_.

(Compare your answer with the text. See the portion of the paragraph which begins on previous page.)

Use the words listed below to complete the following statement:

material	ultimate	understand
task	Creator	transcends
eternal		

The \_\_\_\_\_ of the preacher is to help man to \_\_\_\_\_ the relation of his \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ existence to created \_\_\_\_\_ and to the \_\_\_\_\_ who \_\_\_\_\_ the material.

(Compare your answers with the text, paragraph 3.)

A preacher should guard against twisting the content of the Bible to fit a flashy \_\_\_\_\_ or a sensational \_\_\_\_\_.

(outline, subject)

"The Heavyweight Champion Who  
Lost His Title"  
"The Preacher Who Lost His Head  
at a Dance"  
"Beds Too Short and Covers Too Narrow"

The task of the preacher is not to impress the audience with his personality or eloquence nor to entertain them. Humour has a place in sermons, if it draws attention to the message or illustrates points in the message. Otherwise it detracts and should not be used. It can be an effective tool in communicating God's truth when it is properly used, but not every type personality lends itself to the effective use of humour.

The use of homiletical principles does not need to be shallow. A preacher benefits by learning those principles of speech which are worthy. Hard work is required to master and use effectively homiletical rules, but the Word of God can be set forth more clearly when right principles are utilized.

The role of the preacher is to proclaim the Word of God. He succeeds in his responsibility when he magnifies Christ and minimizes himself. When John the Baptist appeared, he was a popular prophet and gained a large following. After he gave witness to the greatness of Christ, whom he baptized, John was overshadowed by Him. John 3:30 records his response to losing his own following to one greater than himself: "He must increase, but I must decrease." The purpose of the pastor's pulpit ministry is to bring honour to Christ and glory to God. This purpose is accomplished by his faithfully proclaiming the Word of God in the clearest way possible. Sitting many hours at a desk to master the meaning of Scripture and to express it in a balanced, coherent, clear way constitutes hard and tedious work. But it is the Word of God which man proclaims. The dignity and worth of the message justify the laborious task of preparation.

His belief about the Word of God

The message of the preacher will be either the words of man or the Word of God. If his purpose is to speak forth God's Word, he will be faithful in its interpretation. The preacher does the work of a prophet who receives and speaks forth God's Word to the people.

The prophets of old received special revelation through historical events and spiritual revelations in the form of dreams, visions, and heavenly voices. The revelations they received, however, were only partial (cf. Heb. 1:1ff.). God's full manifestation of Himself and His will came in His Son, whom John

A preacher's task does not include impressing the congregation with his \_\_\_\_\_  
or \_\_\_\_\_.  
  
(personality, eloquence)

The words to be used in filling in blanks in the following statement all begin with "p."  
To \_\_\_\_\_ the Word of God is the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ ministry.

(proclaim, primary purpose, pulpit)

Read the last two paragraphs on this page. Then compare the role of a modern preacher with that of an Old Testament prophet.

- Both proclaim the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
- An Old Testament prophet's revelation was \_\_\_\_\_.

(Word, God, partial. Continue on next page.)

called the Word of God (John 1:1ff.). The modern preacher, therefore, has a superior revelation to that of the Old Testament prophets. He has the complete and final Word of God in Jesus Christ.

The Word which became flesh dwelt among men and made known the inner nature and mind of God. God's Word, expressed in a historical person, was written in order to be preserved for men of later generations. The Bible embodies the Word of God, and the preacher's task is to make it known.

The Word of God is the good news (gospel) that God has come to His people in His Son. He has come to redeem them from the powers of evil and for eternal fellowship with Himself in His Kingdom. God's great act in Christ requires that man respond through repentance and faith. The gospel is that sinful man who is separated from God is not without hope, for God in His mercy has provided for man's forgiveness. Man is threatened by death as the wages of his sin, but he is given hope of victory over death through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Man is faced with oppression and defeat, but he is given victory by the returning Lord.

As the successor of the prophets, the preacher does not need to receive piecemeal direct revelation. God's full revelation has been given in His Son. It is the task of the preacher to interpret that revelation and to help the people understand how it applies to their daily lives. Interpretation and application require the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Both Peter and Paul recognized that the Old Testament, the word of prophecy, contained truths which Jewish teachers could not discover or understand. The Old Testament spoke of the suffering of the Messiah, but most Jews expected Him to be a victorious military leader. Even Peter had difficulty understanding Jesus' prediction of His death and resurrection. On the Day of Pentecost, after the Holy Spirit had descended, Peter's comprehension was illuminated by the Spirit of truth. Jesus' statements began to make sense and Peter saw their relation to Old Testament Scriptures. Peter's sermon at Pentecost, contrasted to his lack of understanding at the trial of Jesus, is a good example of the benefit of insight into the meaning of Scripture by the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

As the pastor seeks to understand the Word of God and prepares to organize his preaching, he needs the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Peter stated that prophecy does not originate with man; therefore, it is not to be interpreted without the illumination of the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:20f.). The Spirit speaks to men's minds and gives them understanding as they study the Word of God and seek to know its meaning. The widespread misconception that the Spirit will inspire men's hearts and fill their minds with understanding apart from study and meditation is not

3. A modern preacher has \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ revelation.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Interpretation and application of God's full revelation through His Son require the guidance of the \_\_\_\_\_.

Write BP (Before Pentecost) or AP (After Pentecost) before each of the following statements.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Peter and the other apostles could not understand the nature of Jesus' messiahship.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Peter preached with power that Jesus is the Messiah.

(Holy Spirit, 1. BP, 2. AP)

supported by the Bible. The man who gives himself to study and preparation for preaching can expect the presence of God's Spirit to illuminate his understanding as long as his purpose is to honour Christ and to glorify God.

A Personal Experience of God's Grace

Reference has already been made to Paul's comment "that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21). Preaching is not to be understood as formal and flowery words about an impersonal truth. Its content is the message of God's mercy and love to His people. Preaching is the proclamation of the good news by those who have experienced it.

In the Old Testament, God became known through man's encounter with the Divine Being. When God chose to give forth his full revelation, He spoke in the person of His Son. God has continued to make Himself known through persons whose preaching grows out of their personal experience. Sermons presenting material which is known only theoretically to the preacher but which has not become part of his faith are superficial and ineffective. A man, whose father was a preacher, was awaiting trial for a number of criminal offences. In his youth, he had listened to sermons by his father which contained descriptions of miraculous events in the Old and New Testaments. The young man confronted his father with the question, "Do you really believe these stories that you tell in your sermons?" The father replied that he did not, but they made good material for sermons. The son behind prison bars awaiting trial boasted of his disbelief in God and his confidence that a good lawyer would gain his freedom.

The direction of world history has been changed on numerous occasions by preaching. The Roman culture was permeated by Christian influence, and eventually Christianity was adopted as the state religion. The pagan Germanic tribes of northern Europe, which invaded the Roman Empire, were brought under the influence of Christianity, and their cultures were changed. The stagnant Church of the Middle Ages was shaken by the preaching of Martin Luther. The spiritual awakening in England resulted from the preaching of John Wesley and George Whitefield (beginning in 1738) and perhaps saved England from following France in a peasants' revolution. God has used the foolishness of preaching to save nations as well as individuals who believe.

One wonders how the course of history would have been altered had Mohammed encountered a pure and clearly defined Christianity. Instead, the

Man's mind is illumined by the Spirit through study of God's \_\_\_\_\_.

(Word)

Match the following words and meanings to show the two aspects of preaching.

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| ___ 1. Content | a. The proclamation of the Good News by those who have experienced it. |
| ___ 2. Method  | b. The message of God's mercy and love.                                |

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Three examples of how preaching changed world history are:

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ Empire adopted \_\_\_\_\_ as the state religion.
2. Cultures of pagan \_\_\_\_\_ tribes were changed under the influence of \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The awakening in \_\_\_\_\_ under the preaching of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ probably prevented a peasants' revolution.

(Roman, Christianity, Germanic, Christianity, England, Wesley, Whitefield)

Christianity to which he was exposed was so formal and void of vitality that he was not attracted to it. Today, Islam is a great hindrance to the spread of Christianity in many countries. Would the course of history have been different if the Orthodox Church in Russia, before the rise of Communism, had proclaimed the full gospel of Christ? Would there have been a second world war if Hitler had been taught the true doctrines of Christianity? The Nazi movement re-interpreted Christianity in terms of national socialistic ideology. The German virtues of strength, courage, manliness, militarism, physical beauty, patriotism, honour, and belief in racial purity replaced the Christian virtues of humility, pacifism, and belief in racial equality. Nazism freed Christianity from its Jewish background and presented Christ as a powerful living leader, preacher, and prophet rather than the Suffering Servant. More effective preaching at the beginning of the twentieth century might have prevented the Nazi movement from gaining success.

If Christianity is to be communicated in clarity and purity, it must be presented through a person. That person must have experienced what he attempts to communicate if his words are to be taken seriously. God continues to make His will and nature known through persons. Those who have encountered the living God through faith in Christ proclaim their experience and knowledge of God. Preaching is not talking about abstract ideas, but it is communicating what one knows about a Person (the Son of God) to persons.

#### An Understanding of the Nature of Preaching

Four factors enter into each preaching situation: the message, the messenger, the recipients, and God. They can be depicted as a triangle composed of God, the preacher, and the audience focusing on a message, which is the gospel. The message is from God and is inspired by His Spirit. The message is given to the preacher through the leadership of the Holy Spirit, and it is to be shared with the people. The preacher is concerned with knowing the message which God has for His people and with communicating it to God's people in the clearest possible way. T. Harwood Pattison has defined preaching as "the spoken communication of divine truth with a view to persuasion."<sup>1</sup> Phillips Brooks defined it as "the communication of truth by man to men."<sup>2</sup> These definitions point

<sup>1</sup>The Making of the Sermon (Philadelphia: The American Baptist Publication Society, 1898), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Lectures on Preaching (London: Griffith, Farrar and Co., 1877), p. 5.

Preaching is personally communicating what one knows from \_\_\_\_\_ and from the \_\_\_\_\_ about \_\_\_\_\_, the Son of God.

(experience, Bible, Jesus)

Four factors which enter into each preaching situation are:

1. the \_\_\_\_\_
2. the \_\_\_\_\_
3. the \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

T. Harwood Pattison defined preaching as "the spoken \_\_\_\_\_ of divine \_\_\_\_\_ with a view to \_\_\_\_\_."

(Compare your answers with the text.)

out that the sermon is concerned with content, form of communication, and purpose.

For many, there is one important dimension to preaching, that of rhetorical form. The form shows through the content in the structure of an outline. Consequently, some tend to deduce that preaching is a listing of carefully worded points. Preaching was never intended to be form as over against message or content. It is primarily a message set forth in rhetorical form in order to make the message clearer for more effective communication. H.C. Brown states that the first great principle of preaching is "the use of the Bible for sermons which are hermeneutically accurate, theologically oriented, psychologically directed, rhetorically structured, and orally communicated to the audience by a God-called minister led by the Holy Spirit."<sup>3</sup> Included in this definition are:

the content of preaching which is the Bible,

the chief tool of preaching which is hermeneutics (principles of interpretation),

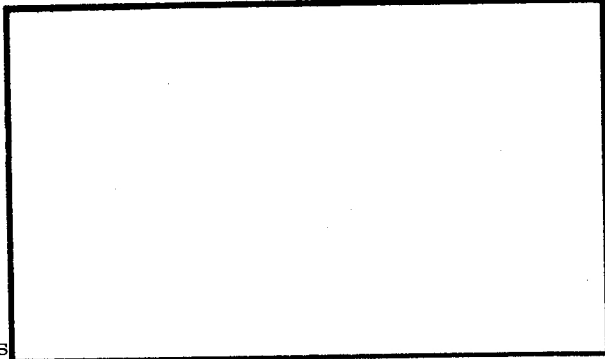
the perspective of preaching which is theology,

the approach of preaching which is audience psychology,

the structure of preaching which is rhetoric,

the expression of preaching which is oratory or oral speech.

Another definition of preaching is the interpretation, communication, and application of biblical truths to meet human needs. Interpretation is concerned with the true meaning of the Scripture passage which will give content to the sermon. Communication has to do with the form and delivery of the biblical truth in a clear and forceful manner. Application is concerned with the purpose of the biblical truth and how it will affect human life. To understand preaching by this definition keeps the biblical content central and makes the rhetorical form or the mechanics of structure subservient to content.



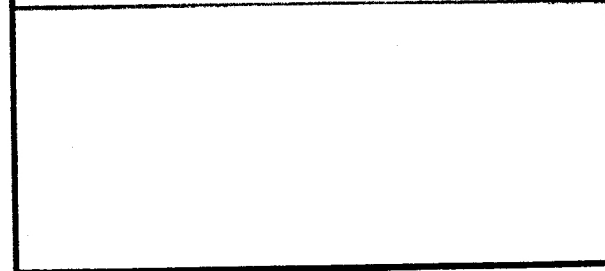
*Try to fill in the main word in each of the six elements contained in Brown's first great principle of preaching.*

1. *The content of preaching is the \_\_\_\_\_.*
2. *The chief tool is \_\_\_\_\_.*
3. *The perspective is \_\_\_\_\_.*
4. *The approach is \_\_\_\_\_.*
5. *The structure is \_\_\_\_\_.*
6. *The expression is \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(Compare your answers with the text.)*

*Another definition of preaching is--  
the \_\_\_\_\_,  
and \_\_\_\_\_ of biblical  
truths to meet human needs.*

*(interpretation, communication, application)*



<sup>3</sup>A Quest for Reformation in Preaching (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1968), pp. 28f.

Home Study Exercise

Basic activity (Levels 1, 2, and 3). After reading the study guide text, answer the following questions.

1. Describe briefly five areas of ministry. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Give the meaning of vocation and list three Scriptures indicating that God calls everyone. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What is the task of the church? List the functional ministries required to accomplish it. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Who should interpret God's call of a man to the pastorate? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Who determines the spiritual gifts a Christian receives? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Distinguish between abilities and spiritual gifts. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Give two indications of the importance of the preaching ministry to people. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What doctrines reveal the importance of the pastor's pulpit ministry? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. Name two wrong emphases on the pulpit ministry. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. State the primary purpose of the pulpit ministry. \_\_\_\_\_
11. How is the role of a modern preacher similar and different from that of an Old Testament prophet? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. What biblical experience of the Apostles illustrates the necessity of the illumination of the Spirit in understanding truth? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. How does the Spirit illumine men's minds? \_\_\_\_\_
14. What are the two aspects of preaching? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
15. Give three examples of how preaching has changed world history. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
16. What is required for Christianity to be communicated in clarity and purity? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
17. Name four factors which enter into each preaching situation. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
18. Give two definitions of preaching? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
19. List six elements contained in Brown's first great principle of preaching. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Supplementary activity (Level 2):

1. Write a two-page essay on the four factors of each preaching situation. This essay should explain the relation of each factor to the others and their roles in the preaching situation.
2. Explain the importance and relation of rhetoric and content in a sermon.

Advanced activity (Level 3):

1. In a Bible dictionary, commentary, or other reference book, read articles on spiritual gifts and ordination with a view to determining what value should be placed on spiritual gifts and God's call in approving a candidate for ordination. Also, determine if there is any connexion between spiritual gifts qualifying for ministry and ordination: "Stir up the gift [*charisma*] of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands" (2 Tim. 1:6).
2. Write an essay on how the church should select its ministerial leadership.

Seminar Discussion

1. How are spiritual gifts related to a pastor's call and ordination?
2. What spiritual gifts should be evident in the life of a man who claims a divine call to the pastoral ministry?
3. How is an effective ministry related to the pastor's belief about man's nature?
4. Why cannot a person be an effective preacher if he has not been saved?
6. Explain the nature of preaching.