

LESSON 10

PASTORAL CARE PREACHING

Introduction

The pastor's pulpit ministry should complement his ministry of counselling. He is called upon to give guidance to those planning marriage, counsel to the married, comfort to the sorrowful, courage to the fearful, assurance of forgiveness to the guilty, help to the alcoholic, and faith to the sick. A pastor's counselling ministry will be forwarded greatly if his pulpit ministry prepares the way.

The sermon as an instrument of guidance is one of the oldest forms of ministry. In relevant preaching, people are faced with the areas troubling their consciences, guided to confession, and assured of restored relationship and fellowship. Those with special emotional disturbances are encouraged to live by faith and trust in God's divine power for assurance. Through the preaching of God's love, they are enabled to see that their failures are not a final catastrophe, but that peace with God and other men is possible through repentance. They experience the lifting of their burdens, and their lives take on new meaning.

Replies to a survey indicated that half of the persons felt the major problems of their lives to be such personal matters as futility, insecurity, loneliness, marriage problems, sex, alcoholism, false ideas of religion and morality, inferiority, suffering, illness, frustrations, and guilt.¹ Approximately a fourth of those surveyed were concerned about family problems, child training, infidelity, separation, divorce, poor adjustments to marriage, religious differences in the home, and other personal problems which people face daily. Some were concerned about social, community, and national problems. The preacher who detects the personal problems which concern people and imparts biblical guidance concerning those problems will find a satisfying response to his preaching. He also will experience fulfilment in helping people to grow spiritually. Each Sunday he preaches to souls burdened with sin, to those fearful of life and death, and to those filled with pride, jealousy, resentment, and hatred. His task is to preach the grace of God which is able to bring about

¹Edgar N. Jackson, How to Preach to People's Needs (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1956), p. 14.

List some areas of concern which should be included in pastoral care preaching.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Three steps in helping people who are troubled are:

1. Guide them to _____
2. Guide them to _____
3. Guide them to _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

See if you can list twelve major problems of people with which a pastor should be concerned in supportive sermons. Then compare your list with the text.

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

healing of the soul. It is not always easy to discover the problems which are most acute in the lives of people since shame causes them to keep them hidden as far as possible.

Effective pastoral care sermons must deal honestly with realities of life and point the troubled souls to a life of faith. They should express the presence of a divine power to help solve the most serious of human difficulties. The preacher must have a personal assurance that God is a real and present force in life. He should share his own faith, not in a pious or superficial manner, but in a biblical and real witness.

Preaching on Family Needs

Sermons on pre-marital guidance

Since the home is the basic institution of society, it deserves more attention from the pulpit than it receives. Guidance to couples establishing homes often comes too late. Young people need counsel as they approach marriage. Some of that help comes from parents, but some areas are neglected entirely. They must understand the importance of the home and of selecting the right companion.

A sermon entitled "God's Plan for Marriage" could be based on Genesis 2:24. A man is instructed to leave his father and mother and to be joined to his wife. God's plan includes the two becoming one. Woman was originally taken from man; therefore, even the origin of man and woman relates them as one. God's plan requires husband and wife to give first loyalty on the human level to one another. The man is to cleave unto his wife. A sermon based on the same Scripture could take another direction indicated by the title "God's First Institution."² The home was first in time; it was instituted before government or church. God placed within man's nature the plan for the union of man and woman and the formation of the home. The home is first in importance. It is basic in the education of the children and to the moral fiber of a nation; therefore, as homes go, so goes the nation. Christian homes will restore destroyed churches, but churches have difficulty surviving if the homes degenerate. The home must be first in the lives of its members. Success in life depends on the man's qualities as a husband and a father and the woman's qualities as a wife and mother. God must occupy first place in the home if it is to reach its full potential. Since God planned and instituted the home by creating male and female for one another, His plan should be followed in every aspect of home life.

²This suggestion was received in a seminary class from Dr. T. B. Maston.

Underline the correct words.

The basic institution of society is (the church, the home).

(Compare your answer with the text.)

Some possible titles for sermons on pre-marital guidance could be:

(Compare your answers with the text.)

In speaking on the choice of a life's companion, the minister should point out the importance of the decision. The right choice of a mate is one of the most critical human decisions. There is no margin for error. The degree of happiness and personality development that one attains in life is perhaps more dependent on the wise choice of a life's partner than on any other factor. It is much wiser to choose well than to attempt to alter the chosen mate after the wedding. In choosing a companion, the following areas should be considered:

The spiritual background, the family background, health, native ability, education, congeniality of interests and ideas, and God's will.

Paul advised widows to remarry "only in the Lord" (1 Cor. 7:39). A sermon entitled "God's Will Concerning a Life's Partner" could include several of the above considerations. Warnings concerning wrong choices can be presented in biographical sermons on Ahab and Jezebel and the experiences of Samson.

Relations within the home

The home should be a refuge from the hectic and often unpleasant experiences of the workaday world. However, if relationships at home are unbearable, life becomes very tedious. The minister has the opportunity of attempting to help improve home conditions. A sermon on the relationship of husband and wife might include their loyalty to each other. A man is to change his first loyalty from his father and mother to his wife when he marries (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5; Eph. 5:31). Companions are to be faithful to each other, avoiding adulterous relations with others (Exod. 20:14). They are to be submissive to each other (1 Cor. 7:3-5; Eph. 5:22-24; 1 Pet. 3:1-2) and to love one another (Eph. 5:25-27; Titus 2:4).

Wives are enjoined to submit themselves to their husbands as unto the Lord because the husband is head of the wife even as Christ is head of the Church (Eph. 5:22-23). To submit means to recognize the husband as the head of the home. In some countries, women are rebelling against the role of submissiveness in the home. They have identified it with discrimination and inferiority. The continued emphasis in society that the submissive person is an inferior servant, a role to be despised, is being exploited by several movements. The Master Himself demonstrated the fallacy of this emphasis by assuming the role of a servant and washing the feet of His disciples. Servanthood was a prerequisite to Jesus' exaltation and glory. He pointed out that the Gentile leaders desired lordship, but His mission was to serve (Luke 22:25-27). Jesus' life of service opened the way for His exaltation to the right hand of God (Phil. 2:5-8).

Another possible title for a sermon on pre-marital guidance could be _____

(Compare your answer with the text.)

Read this paragraph and the next one. Then fill in family members to indicate various relationships within the home about which a pastor should preach.

1. A _____ loyalty to his wife
2. A _____ relation to her husband
3. A _____ relation to his children
4. The influence of a good _____
5. The _____ relation to parents

(husband's, wife's, father's, mother, children's)

Those who see the statements of Scripture concerning woman in the home as unjust have not accepted nor understood the meaning of life. Motherhood is unsurpassed in honour and importance, and to make a home successful is to contribute to society's most important institution. The importance of her role is graphically illustrated by a teen-ager who lost his mother by death. He said, "Don't get me wrong. I love my Dad. But when the mother is gone out of the home, there just isn't any home left." From the mother comes warmth and tenderness. The same concepts are portrayed in the word "wife." The call from children, "Hey, Mom!" expresses a relationship which cannot be replaced and it is not the role of an unimportant servant. Life has its meaning in relationships rather than in positions and titles.

The same passage which instructs women to be submissive to their husbands commands husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the Church. The word for love means to give sacrificially for the benefit of the object. Christ gave His life in service to the Church. The husband is to give his life in service to the wife and family. Love prevents his leadership in the home from becoming tyrannical and dictatorial.

The father is also influential in the lives of his children. Abraham portrayed a father of great faith in his willingness to offer his son Isaac. He responded to Isaac's question concerning a sacrifice with the answer that God would provide. The faith of Abraham was perpetuated through his descendants. The negative influence of fathers is illustrated by the kings of Israel and Judah whose sons followed in their footsteps.

William Hulme describes the man as the head of the home but the woman as the heart of the home.³ Although God's authority and leadership may be depicted by the analogy of fathers, His love is best portrayed by the analogy of mothers. The pastor should help the woman to understand the importance of her role by preaching on "The Influence of a Good Mother," and "Qualities of an Ideal Wife." Biographical sermons can be developed from the mothers of Moses, Samuel, Jesus, and Timothy. The writer of Proverbs had much to say about a good wife.

Attention should also be given to the relation of children to parents. Children are to fear or reverence (Lev. 19:3), honour (Exod. 20:12; Mark 7:10; Eph. 6:2), and obey (Eph. 6:1) their parents who are to provide or care for their children (Matt. 15:3-9).

³The Pastoral Care of Families (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 24ff.

Life's meaning is in r _____
rather than in p _____ and titles.

(relationships, positions)

Is this statement true or false?

The word for love which is used in the Bible concerning family relationships means giving sacrificially for the benefit of the other. _____

(Compare your answer with the text.)

Parents are not to provoke their children to wrath (Eph. 6:4); they are to love, teach and train them, and raise them in the fear of the Lord (Tit. 2:4; Deut. 6:6-7; Prov. 22:6; Eph. 4:6). Fathers are to provide for their children's material needs (1 Tim. 5:8).

Speaking to family problems

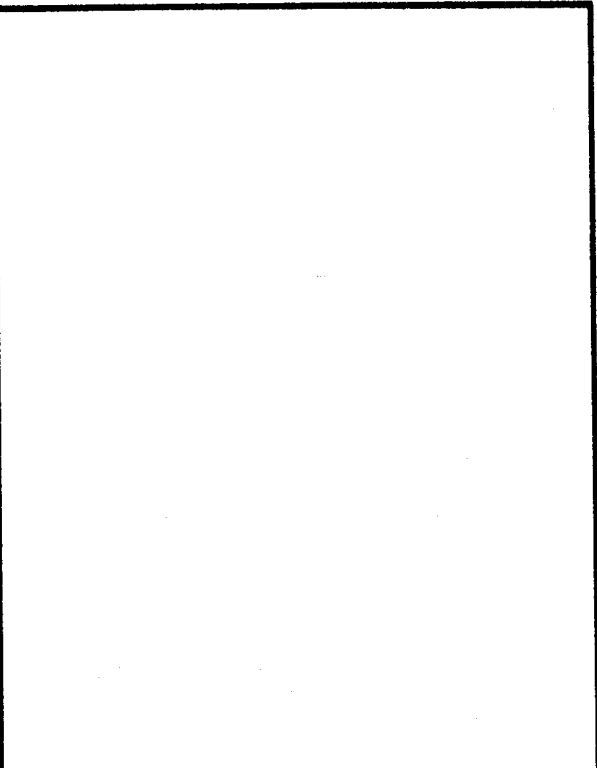
Marriage is a covenant relationship which assigns responsibility to both man and woman. Sometimes that covenant is ruptured by disillusionment, anxiety, guilt, shame, and bitterness. The same attitudes which distort relations with neighbours can threaten the relation of companions, but the problems are much more intense because of the intimate relations within the home.

The application of Christian love can solve most marital difficulties. On the other hand, selfishness on the part of one or both partners can do much to destroy the companionship. Problems may arise because of lack of understanding of one another. Misunderstandings lead to emotional disturbances which in turn create sexual barriers. Underlying feelings and attitudes may be the cause of physical incompatibility.

Many sermons on general Christian themes can be applied to relationships within the home. As previously mentioned, the application of Christian love solves a multitude of problems. Since the home involves the most intimate relationships of society, love should first be applied there. The Bible instructs Christians to be forgiving of one another, to avoid anger and jealousy, and to prefer one another in honour. Any of these subjects can be applied to the relationship of companions. Because no two people are alike, it is essential for companions to be patient, willing to forgive, and considerate of one another.

Some attention should be given to what Jesus said about marriage and divorce (cf. Matt. 5:31f.; 19:3-12; Mark 10:2-12). Many marital problems can be resolved if each party is determined to find a solution to them. The permanency of marriage needs emphasizing along with the necessity of making adjustments. By the grace of God, a Christian can make the necessary adjustments.

The home should be dedicated to God. The purpose of children, according to the Bible, is to bring joy to the home, but they also place responsibilities on the parents to train them in the way of the Lord. When parents bring children into the world, they are responsible for them. Unfortunately, some parents, especially fathers, neglect their responsibilities to the home. The innocent child is the one to suffer.



Some Christian attitudes which apply especially to relationships within the home are:
l _____, f _____, p _____,
avoiding j _____ and a _____,
and being c _____.

(love, forgiveness, patience, jealousy, anger, considerate)



Children bring to parents both _____ and _____.

(joy, responsibility)

Preaching to the Emotionally Disturbed

Messages to help the guilty

Emotional disturbance is a state of anxiety caused by guilt, fear, defeat, and loneliness. Guilt is the combination of a feeling of pleasure in the forbidden and fear for desiring it. It is tied closely to the concept of sin. Certain pleasurable acts lead to social conflict and to disruption of relationship with God; therefore, they are forbidden. A person who has participated in a forbidden pleasure has committed sin and suffers from fear of punishment, either in this life or beyond death. Guilt serves a positive purpose as an internal regulator of responsible conduct.

Guilt leads to anxiety and is the basic source of emotional disturbances or neuroses. It is the result of a responsible person's choosing wrong and knowing that punishment is deserved. It also includes the fear of being rejected by a person important in one's life. Real guilt should be distinguished from guilt feelings. It involves any situation in which there is an actual violation of moral demands. Guilt feelings are the expression of a painful awareness that such a violation has been made. Often people feel guilty after the death of a loved one; they are not sure everything possible was done for the departed while he was still living. The preacher needs to be assuring to those with guilt feelings rather than accusing them of sin.

Those with real guilt need forgiveness for the wrong thoughts or actions for which they are responsible. The Bible promises forgiveness to those who confess their sins and ask Christ to forgive them (1 John 1:9). The goal of every Christian is to live perfectly, but since all are sinful in nature and continue to commit sin, guilt will be experienced. John warned that those who deny they have committed sin are liars (1 John 1:8). To deny sin does not remove guilt. The only solution is confession and forgiveness.

Jesus pointed out to His disciples that they should be willing to forgive their fellow-man since God had forgiven them of so much (Matt. 18:21-35). If one has committed wrong against his brother, he cannot genuinely worship God as long as he has a guilty conscience; therefore, he should leave his "gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matt. 5:24). On an occasion, Peter experienced such strong guilt that he could not face his Lord. Jesus did not attempt to resolve the problems of Peter by denying that they were real but by forgiving his wrongs. The solution to guilt is forgiveness and acceptance by Christ. Since guilt includes the fear of being rejected by a person important to one's life, the

A feeling of pleasure in the forbidden and fear for desiring it is called _____.

(guilt)

Guilt leads to a _____ and is the basic source of n _____.

(anxiety, neurosis)

Match the need with the circumstance.

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| ___ 1. People with real guilt need | a. assurance |
| ___ 2. People with guilt feelings need | b. forgiveness |

(b-1, a-2)

Now that you have read paragraphs 3 and 4, match each Scripture text with its theme.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| ___ 1. Confession and forgiveness | a. Philippians 3:13ff. |
| ___ 2. Solution to guilt | b. Matthew 18:21-35 |
| ___ 3. Forgiving one another | c. 1 John 1:8-9 |

(c-1, a-2, b-3)

solution to it requires that the important person accept the wrongdoer. Christ's death for sinners proves His love for and acceptance of sinners.

The Prodigal Son is an example of one who experienced guilt for his behaviour. As a typical adolescent, he rejected the judgements and discipline of his father. After wasting his inheritance and spending time in profligate living, "he came to himself." His defeat and shame caused him to determine to accept the humble role of the servant when he returned home. The redeeming love and acceptance of his father enabled him to begin life anew.

Paul gave the solution to guilt in Philippians 3:13ff. First, he advised that we should forget the past. Paul had much to regret in his own life, especially the supervision of the stoning of Stephen and the persecution of Christians. He could not have been proud of his treatment of John Mark and his disagreement with Barnabas. But Paul did not keep looking back at his mistakes. Those had been confessed and forgiven. His second word of advice was to push forward with what lies ahead. The present and the future are man's new opportunities. The past is gone and cannot be undone or relived, but it can be forgiven and forgotten. Those who spend their time dwelling on past mistakes miss present opportunities and forfeit future blessings. Paul's third word of advice was to set a worthy future goal to guide present living: "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14). His past life had been controlled by selfish goals. The life he lived as a Christian was no longer for self but for Christ who loved him.

Although little description is given of the publican who went to the Temple to pray, Luke 18:13-14 gives us the following information:

1. As a publican, he was guilty of sin—extortion, dishonesty, and disloyalty.
2. His shame caused by guilt left for him only one course of action: confession and repentance.
3. Though he was guilty and undeserving, his confession and repentance led to his exaltation by a merciful God.

The experience of Adam and Eve demonstrates the voice of a guilty conscience (Gen. 3:10). They would have attempted to maintain a superficial relation with God when they disobeyed, but their consciences would not let them. They tried to hide when they heard God approach. Their sins brought punishment but not total alienation from God.

An example of redeeming love and acceptance by a father is the _____.

(Prodigal Son)

Underline the correct outcome of Adam and Eve's sin.

*Punishment from God
Total alienation from God*

(Compare your answer with the text.)

Messages to help the sorrowful

Although sentiment has been expressed against emphasizing death in preaching, it remains prevalent in man's experience and constantly threatens his existence. Every community has a cemetery, and every home knows that sooner or later death will invade its ranks. Death is never far from any of us, and people persistently ask questions about death and immortality.

Sorrow is an emotional experience of loss and loneliness. Sometimes guilt feelings add to the disturbance. The emotionally mature person has the ability to adjust to deprivation. Children who have always been given what they desire are poorly prepared to adjust to losses in later life. Those who have been deprived of some things in their early childhood develop a tolerance to deprivation and learn to live without certain personal desires. Parents who give their children everything they want are not preparing them for later life.

Persons are able to adjust to grief situations more readily if they have —

- a sense of security through faith in God,
- an ability to face present reality in the light of future hope,
- an assurance of having been forgiven of sins,
- an awareness of God's love and acceptance, and
- a healthy capacity to adjust to living without certain things.

The preceding qualities would make appropriate subjects for a series of sermons. At least, they could form the major points of a sermon on preparing for life's trials. The person who is without faith, hope, love, and a commitment to God's will will have greater difficulty adjusting to personal losses. In preaching on these aspects, the minister needs to realize how important they are not only to spiritual but also to social and physical life.

Edgar Jackson states that a preaching programme which prepares people for the necessary adjustments in overcoming grief must begin with children.⁴ Children should not be shielded from the subject of death. They become aware of it in all the rest of nature; therefore, if they do not learn to handle it on the human level, it will become a source of fear and disturbance. Children should not be exposed to the harshest cruelties in life, but neither should they be protected from the realities of life.

⁴How to Preach to People's Needs, p. 30.

Is this statement true or false?

Parents who give their children everything they want are preparing them for later life.

(false)

Grief situations are faced more easily by persons who have:

1. a sense of _____ through faith in God,
2. an _____ to face present reality in the light of future hope,
3. an _____ of having been forgiven of sins,
4. an _____ of God's love and acceptance,
5. a healthy _____ to adjust to living without certain things,

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Children, as well as adults, need a rational interpretation of tragic experiences. Although every event should not be attributed to God's active will, Christians should be able to see how God can use even bitter experiences for their benefit.

Death raises the question of hope beyond death. Christianity is the only religion that offers the hope of resurrection. This important hope should not be limited to sermons on Easter Sunday but should be a part of everyday faith. God has a plan for each life which extends beyond a few years spent on earth. The person who passes through the experience of death does not enter a realm of hopelessness beyond the reach of God. The resurrection and eternity with God constitute future hope.

Persons who experience sorrow face situations in which they are helpless. Under such circumstances, Christian faith reaches out with the statement, "not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). This statement expresses submission, trust, and hope. Man may rebel against the distasteful realities of life or the will of God, but it does him no good. His rebellion will end either in admitted defeat and helplessness or in disillusionment. By trusting God and His will, man is able to lay hold of a plan and power which exceeds this life. By faith he knows that God's will is ultimately best even though it requires temporary struggles and loss. A hope based on the belief that God's will is best is not an escape or evasion of present difficulties. Life has no meaning and ends in despair without faith in a powerful God who controls history and guides it with purpose. "Not my will, but thine, be done" expresses a confidence in the Divine Being, His control of history, and the ultimate purpose He has for man.

Another supportive sermon on death could be entitled, "How Loved Ones Should Look at Death." The text for the sermon could be the death of Lazarus and the sorrow of Martha and Mary as recorded in John 11. Jesus spoke of Lazarus' death as sleep. He assured the sisters that Lazarus would rise again and whoever believed in Him would never die.

Messages to help the fearful

Fear is an emotional reaction to unknown circumstances which threaten life. Fear has a positive as well as a negative value. Positively, fear causes persons to seek to preserve life by avoiding the dangerous and by taking action. Negatively, fear robs man of peace and contentment, of emotional stability, and of energy which could be used for more creative action. Everyone experiences fear many times during his life, but some live in constant fear.

Fear produces glandular stimulation which releases energy rapidly to the body. It prepares man

The hope of Christianity which should be a part of everyday faith is the _____.

(resurrection)

Faith and acceptance of God's will helps one face an experience of _____.

(sorrow)

Jesus' assurance of life after death to the sisters of Lazarus provides the basis for a sermon entitled " _____."

(Compare your answer with the text.)

for accelerated activity. However, uncontrolled fear leads to panic, immobility, and disorganized and irrational flight. When herds of cattle become frightened, they stampede and often destroy themselves. Controlled fear can be directed to constructive action. Those who have a strong sense of purpose do not panic when faced with dangers, whereas, those who are faced with doubts are brought into a state of disorganized behaviour by fear.

People are prepared to control fear by having well designed purposes and goals in life. Those whose lives focus only on the temporal and material are more inclined to irrational action in the face of fear. It is not intended that man be fearless; otherwise, he will miss the positive advantages of fear. Rather, each person is to arm himself against fear. The experience of David in combat with Goliath illustrates the handling of fear. David had confidence that God was on his side to make possible greater accomplishments than the potential of his own resources indicated. He refused to be discouraged by the doubters who questioned his ability to deal with the threatening giant before him. He determined to place the human resources which God had endowed him with at the disposal of his Creator. He had confidence in victory because of his trust in the power of his God.

Psalm 23 suggests the subject of conquering fear. Fear is not conquered by denying threatening forces in life but by walking with the great Shepherd who has life in His hands. Since the concern of the Shepherd is for His sheep, He does not forsake them in the valleys of danger, nor does He depart from them after making temporary provisions for them in this life. Conquering fear is not the result of building up strength within oneself but of trusting in One who is greater than we.

George A. Buttrick preached on the subject, "The Great Assurance." His text was: "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, ... shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38-39). Paul had experienced suffering, but it had not come between him and God. When he faced death, he knew that God's love would not fail him in the hour of his greatest need. The great assurance of God's dependable love is the death of Christ. God would not have offered His Son in death if He had not loved sinners. The love which was expressed in the Cross will never forsake the redeemed sinner.

Messages to help the defeated

Life is a struggle beset with many barriers. Society places great emphasis on competition. Marks

Write "constructive" and "controlled" in the proper blanks.

C _____ fear can be directed to
c _____ action.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Unscramble the words.

People are prepared to control fear by having well-defined _____ and _____ in life. rosupeps gasol

(purposes, goals)

Fear is controlled by one's having

c _____, f _____, and t _____ in God.

(confidence, faith, trust)

on class work and success in sports are gained competitively. Not everyone is able to win, and the trite statement, "It matters not whether you win or lose but how you play the game," is not sufficient to heal the disappointment of the loser. Young people need to learn how to be good losers for they will face experiences of defeat throughout life; however, life is without joy if it knows only defeats. To save face, the defeated person may suppress his real feelings and project the attitude that he does not care. He begins to react negatively to the normal pursuit of social acceptance. Some people under the pressure of competition reach an emotional stress which drives them to become problem drinkers and trouble-making neurotics.

Success according to biblical standards does not coincide with success according to the standards of this world. In the day of Jesus, as today, the wealthy, the ostensibly pious, and those occupying institutional positions were considered to be successful. Jesus pointed out that God does not measure success and worth by the standards of this world, which look on the large contributions of the wealthy as significant and the small sacrifices of the poor as unimportant. Jesus called the attention of His disciples to the poor widow who gave two pennies. Her gift was more than that of the wealthy Pharisees who dropped in gold coins, because she gave all that she had. The sacrifice of the widow expressed her faith in God, whom she believed would sustain her. Though her poverty indicated defeat and despair, her faith in God brought joy and victory. She had learned that material possessions are secondary to relationships to God and others.

To help the defeated, sermons can be used to attempt to change the standards which judge success. Many elderly people become depressed and lonely because they have expended their lives on the basis of the world's success standards. As they approach the end of life, they face the loss of treasures which may be scattered and squandered by relatives. Life which centres in the material eventually comes to defeat regardless of how successful and how much has been accumulated. Most people like to think that their lives are making a permanent contribution, but the person who sees his estate divided and spoiled recognizes that nothing is left of his life's work. Jesus instructed His followers to store their treasures in heaven, not on earth.

Defeat may lead to long periods of depression. To escape depression, some people turn to drink, which is no substitute for solutions to their problems. The drinker often is one who wants to escape unpleasant realities. His economic circumstances, his home experiences, or his moral conduct may cause life to be unpleasant and even intolerable. Drunkenness blocks out the portion of the brain that is aware of the problem. It gives the person a false sense of

Write the title "Jesus" or "The World" above the corresponding description of standards of success.

1. _____
*faith in God, joy,
 victory, sacrifice*

2. _____
*wealthy, ostensibly
 pious, high position,
 large contributions*

(1. Jesus, 2. The World)

What is used often as an escape from depression brought on by defeat? _____

(Compare your answer with the text.)

release from his problems; but when he becomes sober, his problems are still there. His only apparent alternative is to return to the stupor of alcohol.

The problem drinker leads a defeated life. Drinking becomes compulsive when he faces conditions in life that he cannot live with and seeks to escape from them. The more he is involved in escape techniques the less is he able to face the causes of his emotional distress. Condemning his drinking will not release him from his bondage. However, pointing out the dangers of drinking will serve as a warning to those who have not become enslaved to it. Problem drinkers must first be helped to face themselves and be guided to a power from God that helps to break their bondage. When the emotional problem, which drives him to drink, is solved, he is in a better position to resist the temptation of yielding to that which destroys life.

The defeated person must find new meaning for his life. In preaching on life's higher purpose, the truth that life does not consist in what one eats or drinks (cf. Luke 12:29) can be emphasized. Man's body requires food and liquid, but life goes beyond the material realm. His higher life must focus on God's Kingdom and righteousness. When man's higher life controls his actions, the problems related to food and drink will be resolved. Persons of little faith are so concerned about food, drink, and clothes that they miss life's higher meaning. Those who live by faith in God trust Him to provide the lesser needs of life. They depend on His power to enable them to keep the physical life under control.

The defeated person needs to see that genuine success in life is made possible by a power from above. God has created every person for a particular purpose and has endowed that person with gifts of the Spirit to qualify him for accomplishing life's intended purpose. Paul informed the Corinthians that every man would not have the same gifts, and they should not measure success in terms of identical accomplishments. Success should be recognized in terms of God's will and purpose for each individual's life. Whatever God has intended for him is significant, and the world will suffer loss if that particular contribution is not made. The contribution may not gain the headlines of newspapers nor be widely known. Finding God's will means to help those in need and it brings fulfilment to those who so use their time. Jesus informed His followers that even to give a cup of water in His name to the needy would be blessed by God (Matt. 25:34ff.).

Some sermons should help people learn how to adjust to failure. Every person must sustain some defeat in life. Often failure is not so much a fact as an attitude. Some people come to expect too much to be accomplished in the light of limited circumstances. Too often people are defeated by adverse conditions,

*The defeated person must find new
_____ for his _____.*

(meaning, life)

*Genuine success is made possible through
the power of _____.*

*Finding God's will is finding a new
_____ for life.*

(God, meaning)

whereas they need to realize with Paul that man can be made strong by God's power despite his own weaknesses (cf. 2 Cor. 12:9). Man's defeats do serve a purpose. They cause man to turn to God for strength rather than to depend on himself. The account of Paul's life reveals that his attempts to succeed in earlier life were based on his personal efforts and zeal. Only after he was utterly defeated and brought to recognize how wrong he had been in life was the Lord able to make something out of him. Paul had resisted association with Gentiles, but when his proud spirit was broken, he became a great pioneer missionary to the Gentile world. Paul's life would have been utterly lost if he had not been defeated and brought to a dependence on and submission to his Lord.

Conclusion

Space does not permit a discussion of other areas of preaching to the emotionally disturbed. Additional subjects which are discussed by Edgar Jackson in How to Preach to People's Needs include:

- The Insecure
- The Lonely
- The Angry
- The Doubting
- The Anxious
- The Sick and Shut-In
- Those Who Feel Inferior
- The Aged
- The Immature

Supportive or pastoral care sermons are often neglected by preachers who fail to plan their pulpit work. This lesson has named only a few of the numerous areas of pastoral care which need attention from the pulpit. The goal of this lesson has been to show the importance of including this type of sermon in pulpit planning. All of the people who listen each week will have needs in one or more of these areas.

Pastoral care sermons deal with faith applied to actions and attitudes. If this area of preaching is neglected, people's needs fail to be met, and they are limited in their Christian growth.

Others who need pastoral care sermons are:

1. The i _____
2. The l _____
3. The d _____
4. The a _____
5. The s _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Home Study Exercise

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

1. List twelve general subjects of pastoral care sermons dealing with the major problems of people. _____

2. Give three steps in helping people who are troubled. _____

3. List seven areas of concern which should be included in pastoral care or supportive preaching. _____

4. Suggest three titles for sermons on pre-marital guidance. _____

5. List five sermon subjects concerning various relationships within the home. _____

6. Name five Christian attitudes which should be applied to relationships within the home. _____

7. Define guilt and show its relation to neurosis. _____

8. How should the preacher meet the needs of those with guilt feelings and real guilt? _____

9. List five texts or subjects to help the guilty. _____

10. Name five conditions which help people to adjust to grief situations. _____

11. Suggest five subjects that will help prepare people for experiences of sorrow. _____

12. Suggest ways to help people control their fears. _____

13. How did Jesus' concept of success differ from that of the world? _____

14. Suggest five sermon subjects to help people face or avoid defeat. _____

15. Name six other areas of emotional disturbance on which pastoral care sermons need to be preached. _____
16. By this time, all of your objectives for a year's preaching plan should have been determined. Now add the titles and Scriptures for the sermons with the supportive objective and give brief outlines indicating the direction of development for each title.

Supplementary activity (Levels 2 and 3):

Answer the following questions based on Chapter 7 (pp. 74-88) in Planning Your Preaching by Pearce:

1. What characteristics of people does Pearce state will be present in every church?
2. What does Pearce suggest is the best way of preparing to preach to people's needs?

Advanced activity (Level 3):

Read pages 104-117 in Planning Your Preaching by Pearce and answer the following questions:

1. What significant emphases and events to be observed in your church during the year merit special sermons?
2. Summarize the techniques suggested by Pearce for using the denominational and church calendar in planning your preaching calendar.

Seminar Discussion

1. What is pastoral-care preaching, and how much attention should be given to it?
2. What are the areas concerning the home in which sermons should be preached?
3. How can the pastor's preaching help the emotionally disturbed?
4. What are some of the more prominent areas of emotional disturbance, and what types of sermons are needed?