

Acts 20:17-35 (Num. 27:12-23)
The Succession of Shepherds: An Essential Element of the Gospel

Introduction: "Review" of Sermon

One can hardly read about Paul's first preaching tour in Asia Minor without being thrilled at the introduction and success of the gospel among the Nations of that region (Acts 13,14). H. Leo Boles estimates that Paul traveled "twelve hundred eight miles; this was a long journey for that time with the ancient modes of travel." Boles adds, "Paul and Barnabas had traveled the twelve hundred eight miles and had established more than half a dozen churches within the two or three years that they were gone on this journey" (A Commentary On Acts by Leo Boles).

And to read the story-- Impressive!

- We are impressed with the efforts and sacrifices of Paul and Barnabas to get the gospel to the lost.
- We are impressed with their persecutions for the gospel's sake.
- We are impressed with their successes and failures in converting the lost.
- We are impressed with the reactions to their preaching - ranging from whole hearted acceptance to outright violence.

But are we impressed (do we even notice) that the sum value of their work was not yet accomplished until the apostles returned in order to appoint of elders in every church!

Acts 14:21

When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, **22** strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. **23** And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

c.f. Titus 1:5

The "Shepherd Elder" is posited as an essential element of the gospel, instituted by God upon the apostolic foundation with Christ, as our Chief Shepherd, our cornerstone... Therefore, it can be rightly said that throughout all of redemptive history...

Exposition:

OT Context:

- **And Ancient Tradition: God the Great Shepherd of the Sheep**

***Gen. 48:15** He blessed Joseph, and said, "The God before whom my ancestors Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my **shepherd** all my life to this day,*

***Gen. 49:24** Yet his bow remained taut, and his arms were made agile by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob, by the name of the **Shepherd**, the Rock of Israel,*

The emphasis on God who “knows” even “chooses” his flock:

Gen. 18:19No, for I have chosen (known) him, that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice; so that the LORD may bring about for Abraham what he has promised him.”

Eg.. (God’s knowledge of Abraham as a chosen one)

Ex. 3:7 Then the LORD said, “I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings,

E.g. (God’s knowledge of Israel)

Ex. 33:12 Moses said to the LORD, “See, you have said to me, ‘Bring up this people’; but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, ‘I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight.’

Ex. 33:17 The LORD said to Moses, “I will do the very thing that you have asked; for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name.”

Deut. 34:10 Never since has there arisen a prophet in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face.

Eg. (God’s knowledge of Moses)

Summary: Psm 77: 20 *You (God) led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron*

- **Num. 27:12-23— God *Under-shepherds as an essential element to his being really present among the people as the ultimate “chief” shepherd...***

15 *Moses spoke to the LORD, saying, 16 “Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation 17 who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the LORD may not be as sheep that have no shepherd.”*

Observations: What stuck out to you

- Moses is assumed to be the “shepherd” on behalf of God
- Moses prevented from entering the promised land with Israel due to his sin-e.g. the office is greater than the man—for even Moses was not except from God’s removing him from the office if not worthy...
- To Moses credit—he got that-- His great concern—the need to replace him as shepherd-leader

Significance:

- Distinguishes the “office” from the “man” – this is important in an age of populism and the rise of “personality” oriented religion!!

- Assumes the essential nature of the office as related to GOD as their shepherd..—as if the “gospel” then would be left without God’s shepherding presence if not mediated through under-shepherds...
- Intentionality and proactivity of a “divine appointment” wherein shepherds are NOT self appointed/ordained but are appointed/ordained by God and with God’s validation/approval... -- this is important as it illustrates the importance of “ordination” vs. “self appointment” per the power of personal ambitions—again quite significant in our age that tends to view ordination as something man-made or for the sake of co-opting God for personal ambition/power (which perhaps when ordination is not properly and carefully regulated by scripture it IS abusive)

Just one illustrations of a pattern that is discerned throughout scripture as per the ‘shepherding’ office!

- Eg. Old Testament, the precedence is set for a two-office view of priestly-pastor and governing-elder respectively.
 - In Exodus 18:13ff, we have what amounts to an ancient ordination service. He observed that, “Moses sat as judge for the people, while the people stood around him from morning until evening” (vs. 13). Assuming the importance of oversight, government, and the need for judgment with respect to disputes in their midst, Jethro’s seasoned recommendation to Moses was as follows:

You represent the people before God, and you should bring their cases before God; 20 teach them the statutes and instructions and make known to them the way they are to go and the things they are to do. 21 You should also look for able men among all the people, men who fear God, are trustworthy, and hate dishonest gain; set such men over them as officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. 22 Let them sit as judges for the people at all times; let them bring every important case to you, but decide every minor case themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you
 - Evidently, the task was too burdensome for one man to accomplish- it was to be shared jointly with others, albeit others who were in an assisting role to Moses and chosen from among the people. Whereas Moses was to focus on the priestly duties of representing God to the people and the people to God (vs 20), he was to organize a board of assisting rulers who would assist in the governing/shepherding aspects of the ministry such as to preserve the priestly aspects as fulfilled by Moses.
 - I.e.
 - One office consisted of the governing/ruling elder shepherd- tribal leaders/heads of household...
 - Another was the “governing elder who had special duties of word and sacrament... Levites
 - Shepherd/elder office grew naturally out of the patriarchic family system and continued through the Mosaic period and into the exile even. This office was set apart in its “uniquely representative” nature as laity. One can notice for instance how “frequently the body of elders is regarded by the principle of representation as the whole congregation of Israel.”¹
- As we approach the NT—all of this was being realized in the Sanhedrin in the first century. That is, in the Sanhedrin during the time of Christ as passed down from the Old Testament context, there

¹ C.f. Ex. 12:3, 6, 21, 1Kgs 8:1, 2, 3, 5, 14, 22, 55, 62, 65.

was a distinction between the teaching pastor (scribes/priests) and lay elders (presbyters) As noted by Clowney:

Each Jewish community had its council of elders or presbytery (Luke 7:3). This then makes sense of Luke's description of the officials who accost Christ in the temple as "the chief priests and the scribes with the elders" (Luke 20:1). It is significant to notice that this is the same order that is ordinarily used in the New Testament for stating the members of the Sanhedrin (Mk.11:27, 14:43, 15:1, Mt.27:41).

The key to all of this is how this shepherding office as consisting of two sub-offices/vocations... as related to how God actually and really shepherded his congregation as the flock of God.

NT Context:

- **1) Christ is the ultimate "chief" shepherd of redemptive history**

John 10:11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. 12 "But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and

What characterizes Christ as shepherd:

- 1) As Shepherd, Christ is describes as a gatekeeper of the sheep... -**

2 But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the gatekeeper opens.

- E.g.—Just as we use the word today—Christ controls who comes in and out of the kingdom of God...
Image: a "sheepfold" being brought in out of danger into a protected enclosed area at night so that the shepherd can keep watch over them...and the prowling wolves/coyotes, etc that typically hunt at dusk and evening can't harm the sheep.

This imagery is key—for there IS authority to allow in/out, but the authority is here shown to be a protective, benevolent, gracious authority as to protect the sheep against any all that would prey upon them..

9 I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

?? What are the "sheep in wolves clothing" today that prey upon us"?

Might it be such things as false spirituality (moralism/pharism, Christian Buddhism...etc)

!!

The shepherd therefore IS a governor-government is essential to safe keeping-- thus the "gatekeeper" IS the "watchful shepherd" (two images that will be picked up

- 2) As shepherd, Christ is described as being intimate with the sheep—they know him and he knows them**

The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. 5 A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.”

Now this is a very important description that is two often negated it seems to me—the image here is that the shepherd is INTIMATELY acquainted with his flock!!

The Flock trust him because he/shepherd is familiar to them—they don't get skittish when he comes into their midst because he is known and knows them and has proven himself to be worthy of their confidence and trust..

No shepherd can sit up top a high mountain and shepherd,
Nor can a shepherd shepherd by proxy vote
A shepherd, MUST, be the very nature of shepherd, be acquainted with his sheep and they acquainted with him BOTH!!

3) As The Good Shepherd Christ is willing to suffer for the sheep!!

11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.. 14 I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

Note: *12 He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. 13 He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep*

le. Assumption here is that there is a kind of shepherd that does so for sordid gain-

- Human recognition and prestige perhaps

This kind of shepherd, will abandon the sheep when it no longer is satisfying to them or perhaps just recuse themselves RIGHT when the sheep need them the most—when there is an enemy attack and it is no longer popular...

le. *There is a kind of shepherd that does so for sordid gain-*

- *Human recognition and prestige perhaps*

This kind of shepherd, will abandon or perhaps just recuse themselves RIGHT when the sheep need them the most—when there is an enemy attack and it is no longer popular—again

4) *In Christ's bodily absence- Christ envisions after the pattern of the OT a succession of office wherein Christ mediates his shepherding love*

John 21:17 *He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.*

e.g. continue my shepherding love!!

This is after the “great commission” in John _ - Just as the father sent me, so I send you—e.g. as shepherds...

Notice then in Math—the “gatekeeper” metaphor is used in the great commission wherein the church will be defined by the administration of the “keys” that “bind and loose” into/out of the kingdom of God...

“Upon this rock I will build my church” even as Peter is again named as the foundation as then head of the apostle

- **Acts 20 and the appointment of “under-shepherds” in succession to the apostolic ministry**

Observations:

1) Notice the “shepherd-elder” classification...

Acts 20:28 "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

And NOTE!!

1. vs. 17-- these "overseers" are called "presbuteros" as in this passage just as in the OT
2. Same exact command "to shepherd" with almost identical cautions as related their duties.

Elsewhere—there are again 2 classes of ordained shepherd/elders:

1Tim. 5:17 *Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.*

Note: both classes “rule” (govern) in the church as per shepherding.. One of the two, in addition to rule, teach!!

Thus—the designation “ruling” and “teaching” elder is appropriate as to distinguish the two classes...

E.g. This 2 class elder/shepherd that forms a “presbytery” or “counsel” of “elders” is EXACTLY what was passed down from the OT

(However it is reflected in other scriptures—e.g. does it correspond to 1 Tim 1:3-10 “Bishop-elder” and vs. 11ff“deacon elder”, etc.

2) Notice there is a “ordination” event—not self appointed:

vs. 28--and the language of *appoint*

(Therefore,) Pay attention (imper.) to yourself and to all the sheep in which the Holy Spirit has ***appointed*** you an o (episcopos) to shepherd the church of God, which he ***purchased*** (derived from "appoint" "made) by his own blood.

This language is used here and elsewhere to describe (among other things) the divine placement of a person in some role or office,

For instance:

1Cor. 12:28 And God has ***appointed*** these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.

2Cor. 5:19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and ***appointed*** to us the word of reconciliation.

1Tim. 1:12 ¶ And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, ***putting*** (app

me into the ministry,

1Tim. 2:7 for which I was **appointed** a preacher and an apostle--I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying--a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

2Tim. 1:11 to which I was **appointed** a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

Here-- the "appointment" is to the office of "episcopos" sometimes trans "overseer or "pastor" whose calling is-- *to shepherd the church of God*, which he **purchased** (derived from "appoint" "made) by his own blood.

Its the same person who is also called "presbuteros" (vs. 17) from which we derived the term "elder" as those v
exemplary in faith and life

2. vs. 31-32: and the language of *commit*

vs. 31-32, **Therefore**, keep alert and **remember** that for three years, night and day, I did not cease with tears warning single one. -- **And now, I commit you over** to God and to the word of his grace, to that which is **able** to build you up give you an inheritance among the saints. (those being sanctified)

This language of *commit* - Is used here and elsewhere to describe the authorized commissioning of a ministry of the word... a passing down to others the office of ministry

Acts 14:23 So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they **commended** their Lord in whom they had believed.

These "elder" might very well be "pastors" (presbuteros)

In the case of the pastoral epistles, it is clearly used to describe the authorization of those for the office of a ministry.

1Tim. 1:18 ¶ This charge I **commit to you**, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning that by them you may wage the good warfare,

2Tim. 2:2 And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, **commit** these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

e.g. We know that this "passing down to others" a ministry in succession to the apostles was ceremonially done by the "laying on of hands" so as to signify the passing down of a gift or "calling" that was likened to that of the apostles.

1Tim. 4:14 Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.

2Tim. 1:6 Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

The qualifications and order of ministry were established by the apostles themselves so as to lay a foundation for the church which was being built upon the cornerstone of Christ

R.L. Dabney: "by the authority of Christ through the foundational teaching of the apostles,

"He (God) provided expressly how the preachers were to be selected and appointed. the qualifications of the men he bestows by the gifts of his providence and grace.

Characteristics—in succession to Paul's apostolic "foundation" – the office of shepherd elder is characterized in

1. He considered his own life expendable for the Gospel

vs. 24-- a curious phrase in response to his expected bondage and tribulation in Jerusalem-- lit
but none of these things make the soul precious to myself so that (I) complete my race and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, *to solemnly declare the gospel with respect to the grace of God.*

In effect, Paul is saying-- nothing is more precious to him than the gospel

Whereas it would be a false spirituality and view to see this as over against other divine callings, say as your call as a father and husband-- it is to say that your calling to ministry is to see yourself and your own ambitions as exper

But notice then in this passage what ways Paul was called upon to put aside all *selfish ambition*--

vs. 19-- by way of serving in humiliating circumstances which then filled him even with tears and trails

vs. 23-- bondage and "tribulation" here the same word used by Christ to describe the call to discipleship in 1 between Christ's ascension and his return...

vs. 23-- notice there how Paul's ambition was not for worldly gain-- *I have coveted no ones silver or gold or clothing*

Paul would say elsewhere-- whatever was for gain, I counted as lose for the sake of gaining

2. Paul made it his primary business to be about the gospel---vs. 24

Described as

the gospel with respect to the grace of God.

as unto God the repentance and faith unto our Lord Jesus.

But what I find instructional concerns the many ways that Paul avoided various reductions of the gospel.

1. vs. Against the tendency to reduce the gospel to merely those more popular truths considered "essential" gospel-- Paul here says that he did not restrain himself from preaching the "whole counsel of God" to his flock-

It was only then, and we to succeed him in ministry, that he could absolve himself as "innocent from the blood" of those he ministered to-- another ancient way of saying that whatever guilt our flock may need to endure for their sin-- it would no guilt if we did not refrain from teaching them all things concerning Christ.

But, by implication-- the opposite is true-- we will suffer the guilt of our people if we failed them in teaching the counsel of God's word--

(Note-- the importance of historical theology so as to help you avoid teaching only those gospel truths current vogue... (the history of evangelicalism is littered with in response to the controversies of that day, whole categories of doctrine were forgotten for the sake of polemics-- fundamentalism as case in point--)

It is true, that some will prefer not to have the whole counsel of God spoken to them-- some will be offended, others rejected.(as much is promised by Paul when he speaks of those wanting to have their ears tickled)

More specifically, those gospel truths that are not in conformity to the current fad philosophy or social plausibility used so as to indict you for being "narrow minded" perhaps the worst modern indictment of all...

But you will want to consider the advice of Luther, when he said that to fail in preaching the gospel at that point of contention is to fail the gospel altogether.

While we ought always to be humble to reconsider our views in scripture-- we would always want to remain committed to the whole counsel of God for his people-- believing that if Christ saw fit to inscripturate a truth, it is fit to teach the gospel."

1. Vs. 21: Shows not favoritism/bias/prejudice:

Against the tendency to reduce the gospel to merely an ethnic or political interest group-- Paul observes that his ministry was to both the Jews and Gentiles (vs.21)-- those who would have been both ethnically and politically antagonistic in his day--

What this means of course is that you must resist all impulses that would confuse the gospel with political, social or economic ideology. You will suffer for this-- the modern church is almost always given to culture wars-- but for Paul-- his was a ministry that could transcend all culture wars-- and so must yours be. Whatever personal views concerning economic, social and political theory that you may endorse, you will want to take every precaution to keep these separate from the pure gospel.

For the gospel is something like an organism-- it can become sick (unsound) as much with the invasion of cancer as with the absence of certain vital organs-- so as to make your gospel for all nations-- you will want to rid it of all nationalistic influences and speak...

3. Against the tendency to reduce the gospel to one or another "season", Paul observes that his ministry was both publically and house to house" (vs.21)

I take this to mean that Paul did whatever was necessary to preach the gospel--

It is always easier to preach in public--

- a. you feel like you are getting more credit for your labors
- b. it is far less tedious since real people and problems can be left alone

But the fact remains, that the gospel will be advanced to the degree that both public and intimate ministry is enjoined

When you haul off from your warm family room into the cold of night for pastoral visitation-- remember the apostolic gospel that went "house to house".

When you get that dreaded phone call or unexpected visit-- perhaps right when you were lost in your study work on that project-- remember the apostolic gospel that went "house to house"

When you are called in to the hospital or bedside- remember again the apostolic gospel that went house to house

It is true, that such things don't tend to grow the church or make for a new program that will be spoken of in the next denominational report-- but when you meet house to house, person to person-- you will remember what Paul here says that these precious people were purchased with Christ's precious blood-- they deserve, by right of their being the "property of God" a shepherd to tend them and care for them.

John Owen, *The Especial Duty of Pastors of Churches*

A man is a pastor unto them whom he feeds by pastoral teaching, and to no more; and he that doth not so feed is no pastor. Nor is it required only that he preach now and then at his leisure, but that he lay aside all other employments, though he have many other duties in the church, as unto such a constant attendance on them as would divert him from this work, that he himself be in these things labouring to the utmost of his ability. Without this no man will be able to give a comfortable account of the pastoral office at the last day.

4. And finally Against the tendency to reduce the gospel to either law unto repentance or grace unto faith-- you will remember here that Paul's apostolic ministry was concerned for both "repentance and faith-- as these must always be joined together."

We are as much saved from our "sins" as we are from our "sin" -- yet they are related such that teaching our "morals" can never results in "moralisms"--

Teaching them to imitate Christ then must always be in the shadow of the cross of Christ!

AS I have noted before, sanctification in us is as much about growing in godliness as it is about growing in grace that where sin abounds, your people would see in your teachings how the grace abounds all the more!!!

And as you teach these things to your people as pertains to repentance and faith, law and gospel-- might you heed to the command here in vs. 28

Pay attention to yourself and to all the sheep--

That is to say that you

Finally, what amazes me about these Paul's observations concerning his ministry is that as he noted, these were observations could have been falsified by those hearing him-- since he he appeals to their own memory (vs. 19) to vouch for all this--

Summary:

1) Under shepherds as an essential element of God's shepherding presence!

Office of "under shepherd" wherein God is STILL present in an authentic and tangible way as mediated through the PROPER filling of the office by those called of God to do so.

Christ the Lord is always himself present with his church... truly and actually... for the Lord is never absent from his church, but is always personally present, personally doing and performing everything in all things... ruling, leading and feeding it himself. But he effects and carries out this his rule and the feeding of his lambs in such a way as to remain always in his heavenly nature, that is, in his divine and intangible state, because he has left this world. Therefore it has pleased him to exercise his rule, protection and care of us who are still in this world with and through the ministry of his word which he does outwardly and tangibly through his ministers and shepherds.

Martin Bucer, On The True Pastoral Care and the Correct Shepherd-Service: How this is to be established and carried out in the Church of Christ

2) Not self appointed but appointed by God in a pattern of succession:

R.L. Dabney:

God provided expressly how the shepherds were to be selected and appointed. the qualifications of the men he bestows by the gifts of his providence and grace.

What is a Call to Ministry

It is an expression of the divine will that a man should fill the vocation of shepherd leader in the church of God..

Note: A call to shepherd is not complete until the Holy Spirit has uttered it, not only in the Christian judgment of the person himself, but in that of his brethren also... as by a succession ritual of the laying on of hands...

Acts 16:1 Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father was Greek. 2 He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. 3 Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took him

1Tim. 4:14 Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.

2Tim. 1:6 Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

2Tim. 2:2 And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

3) Duties of Shepherding have been summarized by many...

- **BCO 27.1ff Shepherding is** *the exercise of authority given the Church by the Lord Jesus Christ to instruct and guide its members and to promote its purity and welfare. The term has two senses: the one referring to the whole government, inspection, training, guardianship and control which the Church maintains over its members, its officers and its courts; the other a restricted and technical sense, signifying judicial process.*

1. The positive Dimension: "teaching to observe all that Jesus commanded"

Matt. 28:18-20

1 Tim.4:6-16

2. The preventive dimension: "watching over souls to prevent their going astray. (This dimension is implicit whenever the officers are referred to as "shepherds.")

Heb. 13:17

1 Peter 5:1-4

3. The remedial dimension: "correcting or pronouncing judgment on the wayward."

1 Cor. 5

2 Tim. 2:24-26

1 Tim. 1:19-20

Point-- shepherding requires an intimate and careful involvement-- a "work intensive" kind of approach to ministry...

Note also The Shepherd Leader from Chapter 9, "The Seven Essential Elements of an Effective Shepherding Ministry")

1) Must Be Biblical

2) Must Be Systematic

3) Must Be Comprehensive: Acts 20:

a. Inspection (Acts 20:28): A pastor seeks to become intimately familiar with all the characteristics, circumstances and needs of the people; the people should be conscious that their pastor knows them.

b. Visible Caring (Acts 20:31): A pastor shows that he loves and cares in his visitation. The pastor in his contacts seeks to be transparent enough so the people see how he feels ("with tears"). The pastor

by his presence shows that he cares. By being available (“night and day”) the pastor expresses the love of the Good Shepherd.

c. Diagnosis (Acts 20:20a): Paul was careful to declare the profitable: he adapted his ministry to the “deficits” (needs) of the hearers. So pastors must move beyond inspection and caring and diagnosis. What are the specific spiritual conditions and spiritual needs? What are the person’s deficits? .

- 4) Must Be Relational
- 5) Must Include the Four Shepherding Functions
 - a. Micro-knowing
 - b. Micro-feeding
 - c. Micro-leading
 - d. Micro-protecting
- 6) Must Include Accountability
- 7) Must Include Prayer

3) Three Qualifications by way of three contrasts... (taken from 1 Peter 5)

not... but

not... but

not... but

All seem to get at the possible abuses of pastoral authority (but again, to recognize the abuses of authority is not then to deminish or negate authority, its trather is to make sure it is excercised properly)

- *not with compulsion but willingly according to God*
 - **One abuse is that we do it not voluntarily-- now to those not in authority-- you will have this romantic idea that everyone loves authority-- but once you have it-- you will find that you often hate it--**
 - Peter's point this is to say-- don't visit, watch and care for the flock because you have then to wait until you ar eforced to it... but do it because you want to as for Christ and the good the the church... so... not with compulsion but willingly according to God
- *nor greedily, but eagerly*
 - **Another abuse would be in motivation-- that authority is assumed for whatever personal benefits it could bring... (prestige, popularity, insecurity seeking to prove oneself to oneself, to god or other—all “greed” motivated even if not financially measured-- so not greedily, but eagerly**
- *nor to intimidate (overpower) (with respect to, of?-- Gen) lots,(portion of number) but by example to the sheep*
 - **Yet a final abuse would be to use authority so as to intimidate and take advantage of the people-- the word here is power over-- intimidate, overpower them...**

Peter acknowledge that as in any "power" relationship-- one party has the upper hand (we here allot about this recently in secual harrassment as from an employer to the employee)-- I think this is exactly the kind of thing that Peter is speaking of here--

- **This word then is used to describe the secular rulers of the day...**

Matt. 20:25 But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles **lord it over** them, and those who are great exercise authority over them.

Conclusion:

- 1) **It is a honorable thing to aspire to the office of elder – so do...**
- 2) **It is a vocation that one must to willingly—intentionally—not begrudgingly... lest it bring great harm to Christ's flock and yourself...**

as a fellow elder... 2 shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; 3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.