

“Are You The Pastor?” concluded from 281702

by Bill Crews

Whenever we read of such men in relation to a single local church, we always read of a plurality (“*elders in every church*,” Acts 14:23); “*bishops*” or overseers in the church at Philippi, Phil. 1:1; “*elders of the church*” at Ephesus, Acts 20:17). Each church had elders, bishops (overseers), or pastors (shepherds), **NEVER “A PASTOR.”**

I agree with J. M. Pendleton, a Baptist preacher of the 19th century when he wrote: “*In apostolic times there were no bishops having charge of the churches of a district of a country, a province, or a kingdom. A bishop was a pastor of a church, and the New Testament, so far from encouraging a plurality of churches under one pastor, refers, in two instances at least, to a plurality of pastors in one church. (See Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1). In the former passage the elders of the church at Ephesus are called overseers, and the word thus translated is the same rendered bishop in Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 2:25. Thus does it appear that pastor, bishop and elder are three terms designating the same office.*” (**Baptist Church Manual**, by J.M. Pendleton, pp. 24-25). I have never in my life been “the pastor of a church,” but I preached for many years and have worked with eleven different congregations as an evangelist or preacher.

“Preach the Word!”

by Wayne Goff

“I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the Word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.” 2 Timothy 4:1-2.

Every seasoned, well-trained gospel preacher knows this Divine charge under which he stands. It is a sobering thought which transcends this life and places one before the eternal throne of God to give answer for his work as a preacher.

The passage teaches us that a preacher is not a **hireling** of the church, but rather a servant of the Lord, answerable to Him. A church may “hire and fire” a preacher, but his obligation is to God.

The passage teaches us that some preachers will tend to preach something *other* than “*the Word*.” The context (vv. 3-4) even gives us one motivation for it: **popularity among men**. Shame on the preacher who preaches to please his audience rather than God!

There are many preachers, in the church and out, who preach what others want to hear, who play church politics, and who choose to preach on the side of what is deemed in the church as “orthodoxy.” God knows who they are, and they shall give an account one day.

Gospel preachers are commanded by God to “*preach the Word*,” so they had better spend sufficient time in the Scriptures to know what “*the Word*” really is! Paul instructed the young preacher Timothy about this very thing when he wrote: “*Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. ... Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all*” (1 Tim. 4:13, 15). It takes hours every week of careful Bible study to obey this command. If you think otherwise, then I suggest you work up a decent sermon outline with Scriptural documentation, and see for yourself!

Furthermore, Paul wrote: “*If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed*” (1 Tim. 4:6). Gospel preachers not only teach the lost, but they also instruct the brethren! Some brethren have yet to learn that simple truth.

The passage also teaches us to preach the Word “*in season and out of season*” -- when your audience likes it and when they don't! A sound preacher is a courageous man. Some of what may not be liked is the “*convince, rebuke*” part. Preachers must “*convict of their errors*” and “*rebuke*” (“The word implies a sharp, severe rebuke, with, possibly, a suggestion in some cases of impending penalty (TIME); charge on pain of” [*Vincent's Word Studies in NT*]). You can see why a sound preacher can often become an *unpopular one!*

[continued on page 281704](#)