

Pastoral Ministry

([Ex 3:1-12](#), [2 Tim 4:1-7](#), [Jn 21:15-19](#))

In the Bible we find God appointing leaders over his people to serve them by building them, preparing them for the works of ministry and leading them into maturity. These are Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers. We call them God's ministry gifts to His church ([Ep 4:11-13](#)). In today's Old Testament lesson we find God calling Moses for the task of leading His people Israel from the Egyptian bondage. Likewise God called Peter in the New Testament to build the Church which is also called the New Israel. Even though His appointed leaders fail to deliver the goods because of the pressures of their circumstances we find in the Bible God giving them many chances encouraging them and preparing them for the task for which He has called them .This is today's Gospel lesson. In today's Epistle lesson we find Paul who after Lord Jesus Christ is our perfect model to follow, very confident of winning the crown of life as the prize for which God has called him heavenward in Christ Jesus. There can be no other perfect model for Pastoral ministry than that of Paul.

The Old Testament Lesson: [Exodus 3:1-12](#) God's call to Pastoral Ministry.

No body can be a leader by himself or can start a ministry. In the Bible we find God choosing and electing people in accordance with his pleasure and will to the praise of His glorious grace. The most important thing in any ministry is the calling that the person who starts the ministry has from God. That is why Peter said to be sure of one's election and calling ([2 Pet 1:9](#)). All day long, with, out stretched hands God is calling all the people who walk in ways not good pursuing their own imaginations ([Isaiah 65:2](#)). Whoever

listens to His call and follows Him He reveals them what they have to do and trains them for doing it. Sometimes even though we are aware of His call we don't respond because we under estimate ourselves. From this scripture portion in which we find God calling Moses to lead His people from Egypt into the promised land God wants us to know that He cares for His people and appoints leaders over them. But the first thing one has to do like Moses is to leave one's sinful ways of life. Moses had to leave the blood stained sandals i.e. his sinful past before God gives him the ministry. That is the spiritual meaning of God asking Moses to leave the sandals i.e. his old sinful ways. By removing the sandals Moses was obedient to what God has asked him to do and God forgave his sins and cleansed him from all un righteousness. God will never call according to our abilities. He calls us according to His mercy. That's why Moses when called, he said, "what I am Lord to lead your people." Even though in the beginning he told God many excuses, at the end he was obedient to God's call and He remained for ever as the great prophet who brought the Law from God. In the same way God called Simon in today's Gospel lesson and he became Peter the Rock in the hands of God to build His church.

**The Gospel lesson: [John 21:15-19](#):
God's Care in Pastoral ministry**

When we start following Jesus like Peter, He will teach us like He has taught Peter, who He is, why He has come and what we have to do. Peter failed many times in the tests and also he was chided by the Master. From the time Peter followed Him, Jesus started making Peter fisher of men as per his promise. Even though Peter out of the pressure of circumstances denied Him thrice, He forgave him and gave a second chance to do His ministry of looking after His sheep. The most difficult lesson for Peter to understand is

the death and resurrection of Lord Jesus. Therefore when the women came and told him of the resurrection of the Lord he could not believe it and in despair went back to his previous profession of fishing .Along with him he also took his friends. Then the resurrected Lord appeared to him and re-commissioned him into the ministry of looking after his sheep by giving him chance to reiterate his love and loyalty for Him .From that time onwards timid Simon never looked back and he became the bold Peter.At last he understood the most difficult lesson regarding Lord's death and resurrection. He wrote his epistles to teach what he had learnt. In the same way God makes all those who respond to His call .In today's epistle lesson Paul who also said yes to God's calling was another example of whom God had made to be His vessel to carry the Gospel to the gentiles. In Paul we find the best example of a Perfect Christian, Church planter, discipler, teacher and Pastor.

**The epistle lesson: [2 Timothy 4:1-7](#)
God's Crown for the faithful in Pastoral Ministry.**

First Timothy, Second Timothy and Titus are called Pastoral Epistles because Paul is instructing and encouraging his younger protégés (Timothy and Titus) on how to pastor a church. For Timothy it is the church at Ephesus, for Titus it is the church at Crete. Paul writes these letters toward the latter part of his life and in 2 Timothy we really get a sense for how close Paul is to "being absent from the body and present with the Lord." From the time that Paul writes 2 Timothy to the time of his trial and execution in Rome (ref. [2 Ti. 4:6-8](#)) is perhaps only a few months. Paul is therefore determined to rise up young men to continue the work of spreading the Gospel, and pastoring and teaching the flock. This is a fundamental theme of Paul's Pastoral Epistles. Warren Wiersbe writes that the key theme of First Timothy is "How to manage the ministry of the local church." In this letter

we will find several instructions to Timothy on how to oversee the church at Ephesus.

In the letter of Titus we see how pastors have to teach their congregations to do good works.

In His final letter 2 Timothy we see the summary of what all Paul had achieved in his ministry in his concluding verses. Keeping the faith, fighting the good fight and running the race to win the crown of life, these are the characters that any Pastoral ministry should reflect. The metaphor Pastor as a shepherd reminds those facts that the members of the church are like hapless sheep surrounded by the wolfish enemies in the world and the pastor should emulate the character of Jesus as a good shepherd who gave His life for the sheep and who is the shepherd of the souls. But in the scripture portion which we are looking, we find Paul as

1. **The keeper of faith:** He sets an example who not only had the right kind of faith but always helped all the churches he planted to have the right kind of faith by teaching them pure doctrine .Pastors are custodians of truth (2Time [2:15](#)).
2. **Soldier of high ranking:** He not only was always in the front fighting but also was preparing and training his followers to be good soldiers who also can fight .Pastors are to be like army officers in the army of God who trains God's soldiers in the spiritual warfare.
3. **A coach:** He not only ran the race of preaching the gospel always winning medals (souls) but had become the best coach who helped people to win. Pastors are to be men of God who are thoroughly

furnished unto all good works and role models to the flock helping them to win the crown of life by coaching them([2 Tim 3:16,17](#)).

What is unique that we find about Paul is, he alone could say, "Follow me as I follow Jesus Christ". Therefore Paul is the greatest model that every Pastor should emulate if he too wants to have the crown of life like Paul.

May all the Pastors have the passion of Paul to present everyone perfect in Christ by proclaiming, admonishing and teaching with all wisdom and powerful energy that comes from God alone([Col 1:28,29](#))! Amen.

Life Application:

1. May we all like Moses remove the blood stained sandals of our old self and wear sandals of the Gospel of peace!
2. May we all like Peter reiterate our love for the master and build His church!
3. May we all like Paul become perfect examples to our flock and rise to that stage where we can say, "follow me as I follow Christ"!

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