



Refreshing the Gifts of the Spirit for the Pastoral Ministry

Part 1 — The Pastoral Office & Its Means

September 2018

Guard the Deposit Entrusted to You

2 Tim. 1:1–18

October 2018

A Good Soldier — A Worker Approved

2 Tim. 2:1–26

November 2018

Godlessness & Preaching the Word

2 Tim. 3:1–4:22

Part 2 — The Pastoral Office & the Church

December 2018

Qualifications, Teaching Sound Doctrine & Good Works

Titus 1:1–3:15

Part 3 — The Pastoral Office in a Hostile Culture

January 2019

False Teachers & the Work of Christ

1 Tim. 1:1–20

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Prayer for All

1 Tim. 2:1–15

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Qualifications, Godliness & Departing the Faith

1 Tim. 3:1–4:5

April 2019

The Good Servant & Instructions for the Church

1 Tim. 4:6–6:2

May 2019

False Teachers, Contentment & Fighting the Good Fight

1 Tim. 6:3–21

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“You have gifts that could be used as a pastor!” Perhaps someone told you something like this to encourage you to prepare for a call into the pastoral ministry. “You speak well,” “You have a heart for people,” “You are a serious young man” and so forth. Good first article gifts, yes! So, you went off to college and seminary to prepare.

These gifts were honed by the Spirit in the Word of God. Languages were learned, Scripture studied, faith tested, confessions digested, life examined, readiness confirmed by the church, until you were placed in a call, ordained and installed. The Spirit of God works through means to do His work.

So, you devoted yourself in the mornings to the lifelong study of the Word of God, and in the afternoons and evenings to both the care of your family and the study of your people. You grew to know and to love the lambs of the Good Shepherd given into your care. You led your people into your community and into the world to seek and to save the lost. You sought to shepherd them all through this life to the next, all through the means ordained by Christ for this purpose — His sure Word and precious Sacraments.

You endured the devil’s temptations, conquering by the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. You were driven time and again back to Christ, back to His Word. You found yourself desperate to hear again for yourself His Word of forgiveness, longing to be fed by His body and blood. You revel in these gifts of the Spirit.

Yet, there still is the sinful flesh clinging not only to your people, but even more so to you. The world not only entices the mind and heart of the members of your parish, but — as embarrassed as you may be to admit it — the voices of this present age threaten to drown out for you the voice of Jesus Himself. You have felt more and more alone. You know the pain of the devil’s “flaming darts” and experience in your own ministry the truth that Satan has a target on the backs of faithful pastors.

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Where are the resources? What are the gifts the Spirit has for pastors? The Lord's inspired apostle wrote three letters specifically for pastors, one for Titus and two for Timothy, and we get to look over their shoulders to read them as well. So, we read:

"The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task" (1 Tim. 3:1).

This saying is also *"trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost" (1 Tim. 1:15).*

Therefore, *"he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:5-7).*

"For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer" (1 Tim. 4:4-5).

"Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers" (1 Tim. 4:13-16).

O man of God, *"share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1:8-10).*

"But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses" (1 Tim. 6:11-12).

"You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:1-2).

"I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and sound teaching" (2 Tim. 4:1-2).

You see, without a doubt we live in times *"when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions" (2 Tim. 4:3).* So, how will we help one another *"always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry" (2 Tim. 4:5)?* Actually, our circuit pastoral conferences (circuit "winkels") were originally designed to do just that.

The purpose of these circuit winkel Bible studies, published by the Synod Praesidium, is to provide you with some tools for this task. This year (2018-19), our studies will lead us into the pastoral epistles of St. Paul. This study will be supplemented by excerpts from a commentary on the pastorals prepared by Pastor Mark W. Love of Trinity Lutheran Church, Toledo, Ohio, and citations from the 2017 edition of *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*. We offer this guide with the prayer that you may thereby be renewed in the gifts of the Spirit for the pastoral ministry.

For more in-depth discussion, you may wish to obtain the commentary *Reformation Heritage Bible Commentary: Timothy/Titus/Philemon* or the 2017 edition of *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* from Concordia Publishing House.

Peace be with you!

+ Rev. Dr. Herbert Mueller

First Vice-President

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