***Pastorship In The Local Church - Plurality, & Functionality* (Part 2)**

**Acts 20:25-32 - August 18, 2019**

**Acts 20:25-27**

1) Pastors Are To *"Preach The Kingdom"*, As They Declare *"The Whole Purpose (Counsel) Of God"*

*"Preaching the kingdom"*, is to consistently point our people to the reality that the kingdom of God is at hand.

The central overarching theme of the New Testament (and perhaps the entire Bible), is the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God is an 'already' but 'not yet', reality.

Jesus gave various parables and teachings that help to give us insight into the Kingdom of God.

Jesus told us in Luke 17:21 that, *“the Kingdom of God is in your midst"* ("*within*, or *among you*”).

Generally, we seem to begin with the individual, then the church, and then the kingdom... But is this backwards?

If we'll begin with the end in mind (advancing the kingdom locally and globally), then we have vision! Secondly, if we see the church, corporately, in light of Kingdom expansion - it gives us purpose and unity. Then lastly, if we'll implement this understanding (both personally & sequentially), then we can have personal gratification!

*"We won’t be able to identify the Kingdom geographically or point it out in any one singular event, as even though the fullness of the Kingdom isn't yet realized, the Kingdom has already begun; & we're a vital part of that realization. It is everywhere & it is now. It is within us & among us, & worth losing all we have to gain it."*

In this short passage, *"preaching the kingdom"* isn't only linked to declaring *"the whole purpose/counsel of God"*, but also, blood-guiltiness (when we don't). **\*Vs.'s 26+27**

As with Paul, we want to be *"innocent of the blood of all men"* - as we faithfully teach, exhort, rebuke and correct, from all of God's Word, all Who God is (with proper understanding).

Declaring and desiring the *"whole purpose (counsel) of God"*, brings with it beauty and blessing - but also challenges.

**Acts 20:28-32**

2) Pastor's Are To Be On Guard, And On The Alert

Pastors are to be engaged in their different roles in the church, as they're concurrently - Elders, Overseers and Shepherds. **(Vs.1, +28)**

Not all pastors are gifted to the same degree in these roles but clearly, they are to carry-out each of these responsibilities... Offering spiritual maturity, oversight, and shepherding.

Elders/Overseers/Shepherds were to be on guard and on the alert, both for themselves and for all the flock.

This is one of the central reasons as to why church membership is important... So we know who we are responsible for.

Pastors are to do all of this because Jesus *"purchased (the Church), with His own blood"*.

As savage wolves come in, *"not sparing the flock"* even (perhaps) from among our *"own selves"*, to draw away disciples - pastors are instructed to "be on the alert" ("to be awake, watchful & vigilant"). **Titus 1:9**

Let's be sure to thank God for not only His structure of pastoral leadership in Christ's Church (a plurality of pastors), but also for their roles of shepherding, giving oversight, and for the spiritual maturity and service they bring.

*"A shepherd feeds the sheep*, *guides the sheep (as sheep go astray)*; *they guard the sheep against wolves*, *and* *they help to heal the wounds of injured sheep*." -John Stott

Whether it's seeking to heal the wounds of injured sheep or desiring to protect them (either from within or without), God help us to be faithful shepherds in season +out as we look to feed +guide Christ's sheep who He gave His own blood for, as we ask you to pray for us.