

## **Saint Timothy Lutheran – Edmonds, WA**

May 23, 2010 – Rev. Craig A. Patterson

### **“The Pastor: A Servant Of God Who Encourages And Edifies The Church.”**

(Text: Ephesians 4:12, 16; II Timothy 4:1-5; Hebrews 13:9)

**Context:** The Apostle Paul writes to the believers at Ephesus, a congregation that he tenderly loved. He taught them, in this section of his epistle, how to interact with each other. “...but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects in Him, who is the head, even Christ,...lay aside the old self...and be renewed in the spirit of your mind (4:22-23)...Be angry, yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger;...let him who steals steal no longer...Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth...do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God...be kind...forgiving each other as God in Christ has forgiven you (4:12-32). The pastor is God’s servant to speak and teach these words of righteousness and mercy.

#### **I. The Letter Kills, But The Spirit Gives Life Writes The Apostle (II Cor. 3:6).**

- A. An untrained and ill-equipped Christian can easily do more harm than good as he typically gravitates to teaching some form of the law.
  - 1. Schooled in God’s law, but unable to wisely apply God’s mercy, false or immature teachers can damage souls.
    - a. Such were some of the false teachers in the first century as the Apostle Peter warned: “...be on your guard lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (II Peter 17-18).
  - 2. Some have laid heavy law messages upon the most vulnerable among us and never built them up just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men oppose the truth (see II Tim. 3:5-9).
  - 3. Often, such teachers are self-taught and self-appointed. (a good reason for calling a pastor through an orderly process and in faith).
- B. The Gospel is so much more than a “how-to” message of how best to live.
  - 1. That is just another message of law, no matter how true it might be.
  - 2. The Gospel (Good News) proclaims that real sins have been truly paid for by the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

#### **II. Thus, God trains (builds-up) believers in His Word. He does this through the gift of a pastor placed in the midst of the gathering of believers, a congregation.**

- A. God trains and equips men to live and serve as pastors (overseers of souls; shepherds; stewards of the mysteries (Word & Sacraments) of God).
  - 1. Pastors are called to be “servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God” (I Cor. 4:1). \*\*He is to teach God’s Word “accurately” (II Tim. 2:15).
- B. The faithful pastor “builds-up” souls when he preaches “Christ-crucified.”
  - 1. “For I have determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified,” declared Paul to the Corinthians (I Cor. 2:2,4), “that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men” (usually another message of law), “but on the power of God.”
  - 2. Jesus is “the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.” - John 1:29). (Nothing edifies, builds-up, the human soul like the Gospel of forgiveness of sins in Christ.)
  - 3. God’s grace in Christ strengthens hearts and souls (Heb. 13:9).
  - 4. God’s love is the reason for us to love (I John 4:19). Christ is God’s love incarnate. (True pastors seek to love people like Christ does.)
  - 5. Preaching Christ-crucified frees souls from guilt and gives life to souls.
  - 6. Though Christ Jesus is a stumbling block to some and foolishness to others, no one is saved by any other name (Acts 4:10-12).