

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 teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. 2 Timothy 4:1-5

Well, we are gathered together today to not only worship God, but also to celebrate the hand of God on Pastor Eric’s life, which was affirmed last Tuesday by an Ordination Council made up of pastors who serve with us in the British Columbia Baptist Conference of the Baptist General Conference of Canada. A number of you who attended the Ordination Council meeting have told both Pastor Eric and I that they had not expected the depth of difficulty of the questions and the somewhat sharp nature of the questioners and questioning. Well, that is not unusual for an Ordination Council made up of Baptists, whose function is to assess the candidate’s knowledge of God’s Word, the depth of their theological understanding, their ability to shepherd the people of God, and the strength of their walk with God.

Ironically, these are not the things that churches normally expect from a pastor. Many churches expect that pastor should preach 20 minute sermons, during which he should condemn sin, but also not hurt anyone’s feelings. Many expect a pastor to work from 8 AM to 10 PM doing everything from preaching and counseling to sweeping the floors and to stocking the church washrooms with toilet paper. He should earn \$400 a week, give the church \$100 a week, and be ready to contribute to every other good cause, and financially help those who drop by the church. He should be 36 years old with 40 years of pastoral experience. He should be tall on the short-side, heavy-set in a thin sort of way, and handsome. He should have one brown eye and one blue eye; hair parted in the middle, left side, and right side, dark and straight, blonde and wavy. He should have a burning desire to work with teenagers and spend all his time with senior adults. He should smile constantly with a straight face because he has a sense of humor that keeps him seriously at his work. He should invest 25 hours a week in sermon preparation, 20 hours in pastoral counseling, 10 hours in meetings, 20 hours in visitation, 30 hours in prayer and answer the phone whenever he is called. He should attend all committee meetings and all activities of the church. He should always be available in his office and always in the community evangelizing the lost. He should have perfect children and a perfect wife - who is kind and patient and perfectly dressed; young and beautiful but also older and mature, who can play the piano, serve in the nursery, teach Sunday School, sing on the worship team, minister to women, and host Bible studies in her home.

The truth is, there are those in the church who often have the expectation that their pastor should be talented, gifted, funny, scholarly, practical, popular, compassionate, understanding, patient, level-headed, dependable, loving, caring, neat, organized, cheerful, and above all, humble. The story is told of a chairman of a church who received a chain letter in the mail which said: “This chain letter is meant to bring you hope and happiness. Sit down and make a list of five other churches that are not satisfied with their pastors. Send a copy of this letter to all five churches on the list. Then send your pastor to the church on the bottom of the list. In the next year you will receive 15,625 pastors, and one of them should work out for you. But beware. Don’t break the chain. One church did and got their old pastor back!”

The truth be told, most of the expectations people have for their pastors comes from them and not from God. This is not a statement based on my own self-interest but rather a truth that comes from God’s Word. Yes, I am serving the church as a pastor, but I am also a member of the church, and was a member of a church before God called me into vocational ministry. I’ve been on both sides of the aisle – and my function here today to speak on behalf of God regarding His expectation for those whom He calls to serve as pastors of His church - and His expectations for those who are members of His church.

Our text for this morning comes from the last letter that we have that the apostle Paul wrote before he was taken away and put to death - because of how boldly he lived out his faith in Jesus Christ. This letter was addressed to a young pastor whose name is Timothy who had just gone through the process of ordination – which is the affirming by the church of the call of God on an individual’s life that they be “set apart” for the ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul speaks of this as he opens this letter.

I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. 2 Timothy 1:3-7

Now as we read these words, we need to remember that the apostle Paul was in prison while he was writing to Timothy regarding God’s expectation for him as a pastor. This reflects the reality that oftentimes it’s not easy being a pastor. Paul was speaking to Timothy when he was in chains and so in one sense his words are a “chain” letter that was written as a primer on pastoring to a young man who had been called by God to serve as a pastor in a church. The words of our text for today are the inspired words of God that set the parameters for God’s expectations for those who serve God as pastors in the body of Christ – whether it be in Timothy’s day or in our day today. In the words God gives us in our text today we see the “who, what, where, when, why and how” of God’s expectations for his pastors. These are all words and truths for you today Pastor Eric - as well as for all pastors called by God.

Who. Remember who God has called you to work for. “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.” Contrary to what some believe, pastors don’t work for the church - they *work* for God by *servicing* the church. That’s not pride or arrogance; it’s the truth. The apostle Paul wrote of this in speaking as a shepherd of the church in 2 Corinthians 4:5-7 when he told the church: *“For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.”*

A pastor is not an employee of the church, he is a servant of God doing the work of God for the purpose of God. And because it is so, pastors must never see their service, work and purpose in the church to be that of pleasing the people of the church - but rather a calling, first and foremost, to please God. We see this in Paul’s words in 2 Corinthians 5:9-10 when he writes: *“So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.”* If we displease God, it doesn’t matter whom we please; and if we please God, it doesn’t matter whom we displease. This is what makes pastoring a church so difficult in the self-centered, rights-oriented, entitlement-minded culture we live in today. But that’s why Paul began by reminding pastors who they were called to work for: *“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.”* The word “charge” means “a forceful directive.” This is a solemn charge because God the Father and Jesus Christ His Son are the real audience to what pastors do. Remember, Pastor Eric that your call from God is to labor in the presence of Almighty God and our Lord Jesus Christ, before whom every heart is exposed and before whom we will ultimately give an account. While many of the things in pastoral ministry are difficult, remember who you work for. At the end of Colossians 1 Paul writes: *“Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known . . . For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me”* (Colossians 1:24-25, 29).

What. Remember *what* God has called you to do. “*Preach the word.*” A.T. Robertson once said, “One of the best proofs of the inspiration of the Bible is that it has withstood so much preaching!” Pastor Eric, you are a gifted communicator, and now, as an ordained minister, you are called to “*preach the Word!*” This is not a suggestion but an active imperative because it’s God’s Word that changes lives. I know that I don’t have to tell you this, but this is your charge on the day of your ordination. Don’t ever turn away from preaching the Word, don’t ever water it down, don’t ever be embarrassed by it. Preach and teach as if a person’s eternal destiny hangs on your words - because it does! The word “*preach*” means to “announce, proclaim, set forth and make known.” Don’t ever stop doing that Hebrews 4:12 tells us that “*The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*” In 2 Timothy 3:16-17 we read: “*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*” When Lyndon Johnson was elected president of the United States he asked his good friend Billy Graham to take a position in his administration. Without a moment’s thought Billy Graham said: “Sir, I believe that Jesus Christ has called me to preach his gospel. To me that is the highest calling any man could have on earth.” Pastor Eric, you have the highest calling on earth. Preach the Word of God!

Where. Remember *where* you are to fulfill your call from God. “*Be ready.*” This phrase in the original Greek literally means “be instant” or “always on.” “*Be ready*” to proclaim God’s Word wherever you are. Whether you’re standing in line at Walmart or leading a discussion with the young adults group or having some ice cream with your family at Coombs Country Candy or taking your garbage out the curb or shopping at Old Navy in the mall at Nanaimo or leading the youth on Friday evening or preaching on Sunday morning – always “*be ready!*” 1 Timothy 4:15-16 exhorts us *how* we can be ready: “*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.*”

Pastor Eric, the “where” of your call from God to the church - *is first* to the church of your own family that meets in your home. Again, I know I don’t need to tell you this, but your ordination requires I charge you with the responsibility to shepherd and lead your beautiful wife Jordan and your children Avery, Levi and Haddon – and to next soon to be named blessing of life from God. They love you, they look up to you and they listen to you - and I know you are always ready to share Jesus with them.

Another “where” of your call from God to the church is geographical in nature. You have already experienced this in our family growing up – and you also helped us move when God called our family to pull our roots out of the ground of the prairies/plains of Midwestern states south of the border and plant ourselves 2000 miles to the west in a place called Port Alberni, BC. Five years later you did that all over again when you moved your family here to serve as our associate pastor. The truth is, God does not so much call us to a *place* on earth as He calls us to a *person* – and that person is our crucified and risen Savior, Jesus Christ. In Matthew 16:24 Jesus said: “*If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me*” - and in John 16:26 he said: “*If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.*”

What these two verses tell us that the sacrificial nature of the cross that causes us to come to faith in Jesus Christ is even more specifically affirmed in a pastor’s call to vocational service to the church. This should be true - because when we surrender our hearts and lives to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, we no should longer get our identify from any particular place on earth, *because our identity should be in Jesus Christ.* The truth is, God does not call His people to stay home or go home because the only true home we have is waiting for us in heaven. The words of Scripture only define us in terms of being pilgrims and disciples – and Jesus affirmed that in his Great Commission calling us to “go” and make disciples of all nations. Pastors are to sacrificially “be ready” wherever they are and wherever they go.

When. Remember *when* you are to fulfill your call from God. “*In season and out of season.*” This is intimately connected with “*be ready*” in that pastors are to preach and teach and serve and go when it’s convenient and comfortable – and they are to “*be ready*” to preach and teach and serve and go when it’s not convenient and not comfortable – whether they feel like it or not. That also means to “*be ready*” when they have planned to preach or teach or serve or go - and when they haven’t planned to preach or teach or serve or go. In other words – expect anything and everything can happen at anytime when you are working for God and serving the people of God in the body of Christ, the church. Two texts from Paul come to mind, that have been helpful to me about “*being ready, in season and out of season.*”

For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you. 2 Corinthians 4:6-12

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. Colossians 1:9-12

Why. Remember *why* you are to fulfill your call from God. “*For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.*” Pastor Eric, the reason why God has set you apart to preach and teach and be ready to go anywhere at anytime when anything could happen *is because* the closer we get to the return of our Lord Jesus Christ, the more God’s people “*will not endure sound teaching.*” Instead, more and more, those who claim Christ will only listen to teachers who say what their “*itching ears*” want to hear “*to suit their own passions.*” We see that happening today, all around us and sometimes in us. Notice it says that God’s people “*will accumulate for themselves teachers*” like this. There certainly does seem to be a great number of preachers and teachers who preach and teach a weak, feel-good, watered-down gospel. It’s pretty easy today to do that with books, cable TV, the internet and social media. Pastor Eric, you are called to preach the full counsel of the Word of God, because people may not be hearing that anywhere else.

How. Remember *how* you are to fulfill your call from God. “*Reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. . . . always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.*” Because some who claim faith in Jesus Christ “*will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths*” the apostle Paul tells us that pastors should preach and teach the word to “*correct*” (appeal to the mind); “*rebuke*” (appeal to the will); and “*exhort*” (appeal to the heart). He also tells us we should “*always be sober-minded*” (stay calm and settled when things are troubled and chaotic around us); “*endure suffering*” (bear the afflictions that will come being a shepherd of God’s people); “*do the work of an evangelist*” (share the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ in everything that you do); “*fulfill your ministry*” (Don’t quit. Discharge the all the duties and responsibilities that God calls us to do as pastors). The final *how* of how pastors are to fulfill their call from God is back in verse 2: “*With complete patience and teaching.*” Paul is reminding pastors here that they will need a great deal of patience and they need to be life-long teachers and learners because all Christians are still a work in progress – and that includes pastors. Ordination gives evidence of that. Pastor Eric, your ordination is a significant step in your journey to become the pastor God is calling you to be. Today you will become Reverend Eric Botzet.

A significant part in an Ordination Service in the church is the charge that is given to the pastor who is being ordained. But the Service is not complete until a charge is also given to the church who has ordained the pastor. Just as a shepherd of God's people needs to know what God expects from him, so do the sheep of God's flock need to know what God expects from them regarding their shepherd. And just as we were able to see what God expects from His pastors in the words of the apostle Paul to in Timothy 4:1-5, we see what God expects from the flock regarding their shepherd in the words of Paul in Timothy 5:17-20. Here we read that God expects His people to honor, provide, and protect their pastor.

Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves his wages." Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear. 1 Timothy 5:17-20

Honor. "*Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.*" The role of an elder who is pastor involves "rule" (authority), particularly in handling the Word. "*Honor*" indicates value - and of course we are all valued in God's eyes, but God seems to give additional value to pastors because God has called them to a special ministry within the leadership of the church. That special ministry is diverse, but God's Word specifically mentions pastors should receive "*double honor*" because they preach and teach the Word of God. "*Double honor*" here refers to two different kinds of honor.

The first honor is that of the *honor of respect*. The office of pastor is a calling of God and should be treated as such. This has nothing to do with what we think about the pastor, but all about what we think of God. God's Word tells us that the office of pastor commands respect because God commands respect. The title of Pastor is spoken out of reverence to God because God called the pastor into ministry and God placed that pastor into that position in the congregation. Hebrews 13:17 tells us: "*Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.*"

The second honor here is the *honorarium of respect*, reflecting the conviction that those who are called to the fulltime vocation of communicating God's Word are worthy of the church's financial support. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 says: "*We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work.*" God calls you to honor your pastors with respect and financial support for their work with the Word.

Provide. "*For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,' and, 'The laborer deserves his wages.'*" The command not to muzzle an ox is a quotation from Deuteronomy 25:4 which requires an owner to allow an ox to eat of the grain he is grinding. One who works for something should be able to benefit from it. The laborer deserves his wages is a direct quotation from Luke 10:7. It is clear that this is talking about providing pastors with pay or a salary for the work they have done. But while these verses do again address the issue of financial support, the issue of *provision* for a pastor goes much deeper. Just as the ox needs nourishment to work so does a pastor need provision for his family's physical needs. Just as you can't work an ox without rest, so does a pastor and his family need times to rest to keep from being burnout. Pastors need personal time for emotional health and professional time for vocational health. The sacrificial nature of pastoral ministry can sometimes cause a spiritual emptiness that needs to be filled up. The pastors who pray for those in the church desperately need the prayers of those in the church as spiritual warfare is fought and won by armies not just individual soldiers. In 2 Corinthians 1:11 the apostle Paul writes to those in the church: "*You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.*"

Protect. "Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear." God's Word here calls the church to protect their pastor and his ministry. We are in the midst of generation and culture that is not only disrespects leadership but also aggressively vilifies and denigrates authority – and it has infected the church. Pastors tend to get attacked, blamed and accused of just about everything that happens in the church. And quite often, what pastors do is misunderstood. And even then, often times the pastor is unable to explain exactly what he was doing because of confidentiality. One of the greatest sins of the church is the slander of gossip – usually about the pastor or the leaders of church – that is started and fed by those in the church who are angry because of the unmet expectations they have those whom God has placed in leadership positions – which always includes the pastor. Paul's words here are a charge to the church to protect your pastors from the sins of accusation and slander.

That being said, pastors do make mistakes. Sometimes we are wrong and our flesh gets the best of us. We are fallen human beings, who have weaknesses like everyone else. But even in the midst of that, God calls us to sacrificially serve Him as a pastor in His Church. It is the hardest and most difficult job there is - and the most joyful, satisfying, glorious vocation on earth. The first three verses of Psalm 16 express this: *"Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge. I say to the LORD, "You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you. As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight."*

Today God is telling His church to honor their pastor, provide for their pastor and protect their pastor.

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:12-17

Today we are here to celebrate the hand of God on Pastor Eric's life through Ordination - the affirming by the church of the call of God on an Pastor Eric's life that he be "set apart" for the ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Before we do, I would like to read some words from Dr. Hermann Nell, the chair of our Elders, who sends his apology for not being able to be present himself.

Dear brothers and sisters of Arrowsmith Baptist Church. It is my privilege to support and endorse Pastor Eric Botzet's ordination in the Baptist General Conference of Canada.

Pastor Eric has proven himself as a man of God, steeped in his relationship with God and his knowledge and application of the Word of God. He has presented us with very carefully researched Biblical as well as enjoyable and inspiring messages which have been well delivered. His example in conduct with church family and his own lovely family has been exemplary. He has been a great asset as a leader and elder. His quiet, well considered opinions has been very valuable in the leadership team.

I believe the God has called pastor Eric to ministry as a pastor and that He has a great purpose for him now and in the future. I thank God that He has placed him serving us and I am eager to see how God uses him in His service.

Hermann Nell

Ordination Prayer

Almighty God, Sovereign King, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we praise You for what You have done in the heart and life of Pastor Eric Botzet. You created him, You saved him, You called him, You taught them, and You have been using him greatly in your church. Today we stand before you, affirming your hand on his life to set him apart for the ministry of the Gospel. We pray that according to the riches of your glory You would grant Pastor Eric to be strengthened with power through Your Spirit in his inner being, so that Christ may dwell in his heart through faith—that he would be being rooted and grounded in love, with the strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and that he would know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that he would be filled with all the fullness of God as he serves you in the days and years ahead. We pray also that You would use Pastor Eric beyond our highest expectations, as we know that You are “able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us.”

We pray that You continue to pour Your Holy Spirit into Pastor Eric’s life and ministry so that he would boldly preach the mysteries of the gospel of Christ in you, the hope of glory. Heavenly Father we ask that you would grant him the grace and the ability to shepherd the people of God so that the body of Christ might shine for Jesus and increase the Kingdom of God. Sovereign God, we pray You would fill Pastor Eric with the knowledge of Your will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so he would walk in a manner worthy of the You, fully pleasing to You: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in his knowledge of You ; being strengthened with all Your power, according to Your glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; giving thanks to the You, who qualified him to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

Lord God we ask this day your blessing on Jordan and on Avery, Levi and Haddon – and on their child to come. Love them. Protect them. Guide them. Fill them with your mercy and grace and love. May the be a blessing to Pastor Eric and his ministry and to the churches he serves throughout his life. May their lives together be joyfully spent for the cause of Christ as they joyfully build the Kingdom of God for His glory.

We stand together today as the body of Christ and commend Pastor Eric to God and the Word of His grace, which is able to build us up and to give all God’s people the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

To God be the glory, great things he hath done;
so loved he the world that he gave us his Son,
who yielded his life an atonement for sin,
and opened the life-gate that all may go in.

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
let the earth hear his voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father through Jesus the Son,
and give him the glory, great things he hath done.