

**"BLEST BE THE TIE THAT BINDS...
PASTOR & PEOPLE!"**

TEXT: Acts 20:28

THESIS: A. The pastor's responsibility is summarized in the text. He is to *feed the flock, lead the flock and take heed to the flock*. His *primary responsibility* is to **feed the sheep** – not to evangelize the lost (though he should do the work of an evangelist as a Christian and set the example for the flock). He is to **lead the flock** – both by example and by setting forth his vision. He is to **take heed to the flock** by warning them of heresies and heretics! (Paul named over 20 names forever recorded in God's Word to warn believers against them – some were lost men & others just carnal Christians. Yes, there are some folks even in church you should separate from!)

ILLUS.: One young preacher went to an older pastor for advice. He said to the young man that as pastor he should **heal the sick, cast out devils and raise the dead**. The young man got it mixed up when he relayed the advice to another preacher. He said he was to **cast out the sick, raise the devil, and heal the dead**.

B. Though a man of God may abuse his position, it is just as true that church members may abuse their responsibility. Some, like Diotrophes, like to have the preeminence and try to usurp the leadership of the pastor. Some, like those Paul warned of in Rom. 16, like to cause divisions in the church. Others think it is their responsibility to oversee the finances in the church and starve the preacher and his family out. But those who desire God's blessing on their lives and on the life of the church will do what God outlines in His Word towards the man of God He has sent to the church as His gift to them. God uses 3 titles for His man, *pastor, bishop & elder*, and sets forth the church's responsibility to him. Indeed, **"BLEST BE THE TIE THAT BINDS – THE PASTOR & HIS PEOPLE"** when both do their jobs. Perhaps another title for this message might be: **"HOW TO TREAT YOUR PASTOR"...**

I. LOVE THE ELDER:

1 Timothy 5:17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

A. Support God's Man:

1. He should be "counted worthy" of "double honour" (the Greek word for "double" is twice as much! ☺).

Luke 6:38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

2. Of course this support is not simply financial, but also esteem.
3. Love is demonstrated in a tangible manner – words are cheap.

ILLUS.: Beware gossiping or murmuring about God's man! (Moses!) It will cost you and your children as well as your church's reputation. We need to have a good report about our church among "those without."

B. Protect Him:

1. Another way to love your pastor is to protect him from those who would undermine his reputation or cast doubts on his abilities or accomplishments or motives.
2. Jonathan protected David physically and supported him even against his own father.

ILLUS.: I had men who would have literally laid down their life for me. One man put himself in harm's way against a murderer to protect me! In our outdoor services I had men assume the position of bodyguards. (My preaching was strong and not always politically correct or popular!)

II. OBEY THE BISHOP:

Hebrews 13:7 Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.

Hebrews 13:17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

ILLUS.: You have been with me so far, but some of you are about to get off the bandwagon here. Please hear me out. The word "bishop" means "overseer," i.e., he is the one responsible for the oversight of every ministry in the church. In this capacity he needs to be obeyed.

A. A Ministering Authority: The Authority of a Shepherd

1 Peter 5:2-3 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

1. The authority he wields is that of a loving shepherd for his sheep.
2. It is for the purpose of building up and protecting the flock and the work.

B. A Submissive, Humble Authority: The Authority of a Steward

1. The church is God's property; the people are God's people; and the work is GOD'S work – the man of God is simply a steward in charge till the Master returns.
2. I used to cringe when someone would say "Are you a member of Pastor Fedena's church?" - I knew what they meant, but I also knew I was only a steward & that the church was the Lord's, never mine!

C. It is a Loving Authority: The Authority of a Father

1. The rule of a pastor/bishop is never to be overbearing, but loving and compassionate.
2. His rule is never to be self-serving, but always have the best interests of the flock at heart.

III. REFRESH THE PASTOR:

2 Timothy 1:16-18 The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.

A. Loyalty Refreshes Him:

1. Onesiphorus was not ashamed of Paul's chains and imprisonment.
2. He was not ashamed to be identified with this "jail-bird" – Paul was imprisoned for preaching God's Word, he was not guilty of something to be ashamed of.
 - a. This man "oft refreshed" Paul; he was constant, loyal and dedicated to his friend.
 - b. He refreshed Paul in "many things" which he "ministered" to him.

B. Service Refreshes Him:

1. Know what the man of God needs personally, professionally and in the ministry and decide to meet that need.
2. Be there when he needs teachers, helpers, grass cut, snow shoveled, car repaired, etc.

ILLUS.: Originally deacons were chosen so the man of God could devote himself to prayer and the study of God's Word. Too often he must busy himself with the mundane details of the ministry & the main thing is no longer the main thing. YOU suffer as a result – with warmed over messages and tossed together lessons.

3. It refreshes the pastor to know where the needs are: he isn't a mind reader; if you know of someone who needs a visit, who is sick or has any other need, let him know.

CONCL.: "BLEST BE THE TIE THAT BINDS – PASTOR AND PEOPLE" ...when both are free to do their job and understand their respective responsibilities – and do them! When you love him – he can love you in return. When you obey him – he can be a blessing to you. When you refresh him – he can in turn refresh you.