

Hello. We will begin the seventh lecture on pastoral theology. /At this time we will study pastoral counseling.

/10. A Pastor and Counseling. /Pastors meet all kinds of people. /There are many people who appear fine on the outside but are hurt on the inside. /It is important for the pastor to look after them and help them recover.

/The pastor leads the church. /However, the subjects of a pastor's ministry all differ. /When a pastor shows concern and interest for believers' personal problems, the relationships between the pastor and believers will grow stronger. /Believers will then truly trust and follow the pastor.

/Pastor Charles Allen Clark said the following. /"The time that a pastor has to spend with individual believers is the only chance for the believer to grow spiritually. /Hence, a pastor must value the time he has to meet with individual believers.

/In that time, he must give ear to the problems of the souls of believers, and give appropriate advice." /Now, let's look at the first requirement of a good counselor.

/(1) Requirements for counselors. /The first requirement of a counselor is the ability to listen to the other person. **/A. Ability to listen.** /Pastors are in a teaching position. /Pastors preach on the pulpit.

/Pastors teach believers and assign work. /Hence, pastors tend to talk a lot. /Rather than listening to the opinions of others, pastors tend to persuade others.

/When this happens, pastors fail to listen carefully to others, and at times do not understand the situations of others. /It is easy for pastors to point out believers' faults and discipline them. /This type of attitude will not be of any help to believers with problems.

/Rather, believers will be disappointed. /As counselors, it is necessary for pastors to listen to others. /It is enough for pastors to preach and discipline on the pulpit.

/Pastors must show deep interest in believers' situations, and must have tolerance and patience to listen to believers. /Counseling has shown to be greatly effective when pastors listen to others.

/B. A proper attitude. /This refers to manners for others. /When pastors read a book or a newspaper during counselor, /or if he blanks out, it will show a bad attitude for counseling.

/People would have come to pastors to consult with them about serious problems. /However, if the counselor has attitudes like the aforementioned, those who came for counseling would feel that they are being neglected.

/They would want to get up and leave. /They would not want to speak to such pastors

again. /If this happens, it will be difficult for pastors to avoid the Lord's rebuke for their indifferent attitudes for valuable lives.

/At times, counseling can get long. /A believer can repeat the same things over again as he speaks of his troubles. /Even so, pastors must have serious attitudes as they listen to others. /Pastors must show that they sympathize with the believers' worries.

/C. Show respect without discrimination. /As counselors, pastors must equally respect all people. /Pastors must always remember that everyone is important before God.

/The following is a true story about immigrants in America. /An old and weak man was ill and bedridden for a long time. /Both his body and heart were weary. /He had great scars in his heart.

/He needed a pastor's care more than anyone else. /However, the pastor of his church did not look after the old man. /The man attended different churches in the region he lived in.

/Thus, many pastors knew the old man, but none showed concern for him. /However, when a wealthy man in the same region began to suffer from depression, many pastors visited the wealthy man.

/This is a shameful example of pastors' discrimination of believers according to position and status. /Each life is valuable before God.

/People of the world like people with money and respect people with power. /Yet, pastors must equally respect everyone. /Pastors must not take the concerns of the poor and weak lightly.

/Pastors must not be indifferent towards little children. /Pastors must value and respect all souls that the Lord bought with His blood.

/D. Pastors must not be shocked by things they are told by clients. /Counselors must not be shocked or disturbed by the things they are told during counseling. /Even if they do actually hear shocking things, they must not show that they are unsettled.

/They must also not show that the confessions of clients are strange. /If the clients feel that way, they will stop sharing deep topics with the counselor.

/They will lose trust for the counselor. /Therefore, no matter what they hear, counselors must assure clients that the same can happen to anyone.

/However, counselors must be careful not to acknowledge or encourage the faults of clients. /Pastors must not show any signs that sin is to be taken lightly. /Hebrews 4:15 says, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are-- yet was without sin."

/Pastors must understand the situations of clients, and must carefully listen to their stories. /However, pastors must not show any signs of tolerance for sins.

/E. Be the mediator. /As counselors, pastors must give suggestions to clients on how to heal. /However, God is the only one who can ultimately heal and solve problems.

/Therefore, pastors must mediate between God and clients so that clients can receive healing from God. /This is the proper attitude of a counselor who is guided by the Holy Spirit, based on the Bible.

/If the client is a patient, the counselor is the nurse and God is the doctor. /Nurses must pour out their all for the patient, and must know what the patient needs. /Nurses must properly take care of patients.

/However, the most important thing is for nurses to report to doctors the conditions of patients so that patients can receive proper treatment. /Pastors must not become conceited and think that they can solve problems.

/Pastors must always seek of God. /Pastors must help clients trust more in God. /Pastors must help clients seek solutions from God's word, so that they may gain strength and comfort.

/As mediators, pastors must always begin counseling session with prayer, and also end with prayer.

/F. Keep clients' secrets confidential. /Pastors must absolutely keep all personal information confidential. /Next, let's discuss the ultimate purpose of pastoral counseling.

/(2) The purpose of pastoral counseling. /A. Understand Christ's participation. /All people feel a connection with someone who is in the same position as they are in. /Then they console each other.

/This is because they believe that the other person truly understands what they are going through. /Jesus Christ knows and participates in all our individual situations and circumstances.

/Hebrews 4:15 says, Jesus Christ sympathizes with our weaknesses. /"Sympathize" means to be in the same place, breathe together, and stand on the same side.

/"Sympathize" means to understand where one is coming from, and defend. /Jesus Christ sympathizes with us, which means that he came from a high position down to seek the lowly.

/God took on the body of man and humbled himself, and came to our side. /He became our best friend and he lives with us. /Therefore, the ultimate purpose of pastoral

counseling is to help clients living in anxiety and solitude discover Christ who sympathizes with them.

/This is because problems are solved only when one truly finds Christ and enjoys rest in Him.

/B. Spiritual maturity. /If we grow one step mature in faith, most of our conflicts and worries will go away. /Therefore, pastors must make sure that the purpose of their counseling is to help clients grow spiritually mature.

/If the client is a child of God who believes in Jesus, God will personally lead that person to become a true believer. /Then the believer will discover other meanings to his sufferings and troubles other than mere sadness.

/God personally refines believers through sufferings and troubles, and makes them complete people of faith. /Pastors must comfort and encourage clients on the basis of this truth. /All problems and conflicts of clients have been allowed to happen by the love of God. Pastors must lead clients to accept with faith that all these will ultimately be a great spiritual benefit to them.

/Furthermore, pastors must guide clients to give thanks and glory to the Absolute God in any situation. /Next, let's look at actual problems of pastoral counseling.

/(3) Actual problems of pastoral counseling. /There are different topics that are actual conflicts of pastoral counseling. /Let's briefly look at a few important topics.

/A. Problems in church life. /One of the greatest problems that pastors will come across in counseling is each believer's problems of church life. /There will be more disgruntled believers in smaller churches.

/In such cases, pastors must not let believers continue to complain. /If so, the complaints will grow and negatively influence other believers, and the complaints can test believers in the church. /Pastors must meet separately with the complaining believers before things get worse, and he must figure out the cause of the complaints.

/If a complaint is constructive criticism, the pastor must boldly accept it. /However, if a complain simply disrupts the church, the pastor must carefully explain the believer's wrongdoing.

/The pastor must be authoritative, but he must not be aggressive. /The pastor must speak in soft tones and help the complaining believer understand, and at times the pastor must encourage the believer to think well of things. /However, this is not an easy thing to do.

/This is a problem that only God can ultimately solve. /When there are complaining believers in the church, pastors must pray with more sincerity to God. /Pastors must also encourage them so that their complaining would cease.

/There are many problems between believers in the church. /In such cases, the pastor must not listen to just one person. /The pastor must listen to the stories of both parties. /Then as the mediator, the pastor must encourage them with Scripture.

/It is important for the pastor to let believers know that he does not show partiality for anyone, but cares for and loves all believers.

/Both parties must understand that the pastor's encouragement is not just for one of them. /Pastors must encourage believers based on God's word, and he must help them surrender before God.

/B. Problems with home life. /The home is a place of happiness. /Yet, countless families harbor conflict and problems with one another. /The biggest problem is the problem between husband and wife.

/The problem of divorce is rapidly increasing in modern times. /The problem of divorce is also creating big problems within the church. /It is difficult to expect children to learn to have faith if their family is in the state of being destroyed.

/Therefore, the pastor must first teach believers so that they will have good foundational relationships with their spouses. /Conflict between married couples first result from conflict of interest. /Couples come from different backgrounds of growth, levels of education, living habits, and etcetera.

/Yet, the biggest difference is the difference of expectations. /Couples get married with expectations about marriage, but when their spouses do not meet their expectations, conflicts arise.

/Pastors must help couples throw out unrealistic expectations of each other, and readjust their views to be more realistic. /Conflict between couples also arise from lack of communication.

/Husbands and wives are closest to each other, and there must be lively communication between them. /Yet, many do not have good communication skills even as adults. /When such people meet and marry their spouses while in such a state, there will be conflict as a result of lack of communication.

/To overcome this, pastors must counsel and encouragement them for personal and spiritual growth. /Next, conflict between couples arises from financial problems or domestic violence.

/When problems arise because of wrongdoings or faults of one person, pastors must encourage the person with better faith to stand strong with faith. /When couples look upon God with faith, they will be comforted in the midst of their sufferings.

/When families are held together by God's grace, they will be able to resolve other problems. /Pastors must pray for them, encourage and comfort them with God's word.

/C. Problems with physical and mental health. /Pastors visit patients at times, and many times visits lead to counseling. /When believers have been physically sick and received treatment for long periods of time, their souls will hurt as well.

/When counseling patients, pastors must focus on the patient. /It is the doctor's job to heal sicknesses and restore the physical body to health. /When pastors visit sick believers, they must first restore their spiritual health.

/Even if we are healed of physical illnesses, we can become sick again. /Also, everyone will eventually die. /Therefore, it is important for pastors to comfort patients so that they would not become dispirited.

/It is important for pastors to help patients understand how grateful they must be for the grace of salvation, and the blessing of heaven. /Pastors must help patients have hope even in the most difficult circumstances.

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/Pastors must also recite as many Bible verses as they can, remember them and use them appropriately during counseling.

/With this we will conclude the seventh lecture on pastoral theology. /Thank you.