

PURPOSE IS NOT POSITION : Vision for the harvest

Transcribed from a tape entitled:

Tape #156-B

Vision for the harvest

Lloyd Phillips

Fellow Laborers' Int'l Network (FLInt Net)

P.O. Box 113

Missoula, MT 59803

I want to talk a little bit about what we've come here to talk about this weekend which is basically ministries functioning and powering people into their calling, into their service in the body of Christ, what we are called to do and then how do we equip the saints to do that. Then how do we have order in the church while we go ahead and equip people into their places in the body of Christ while we are empowering people to walk in their giftings. The Bible promises that a man's gift makes room for him. Ladies, that includes you. Mankind, any of us that are Christians and we have giftings that open up doors for us to serve.

How do we do that? To the best of our ability, to the fullness that we possible can and still have the church running and functioning and have order and meet all the needs that we need to meet within our churches to the best of our ability.

I want to set some rules down and then I'm going to try to stick to them. This will help me and it will help you to understand. So, for the purpose of this class, I'm going to be spending time separating and pulling down some strongholds in our minds, which isn't always easy. Once it's done, we look back and say, "Why couldn't we see that before?" If we tear it down well enough, then a few years from now people won't wonder what the problem was. But, right now there are strongholds.

So, if I can start with some rules here it will help me to explain some of these things. So for the purposes of this class I'm going to say, "Shepherd" when I'm talking about the gift of a shepherd which comes from the Greek word poimen which is like the god who takes care of sheep, that's what the word means. It's also translated in Ephesians 4 as pastor.

Now pastor is a good word. In the Old Testament in the Hebrew the word "pasture" "the place where the sheep are" comes from the word "pastor" which is "the guy who takes the sheep there." So you can see a pastor is a shepherd, but because of how we use it in our culture and any place where English is used, I need to adapt that. In the New Testament that word poimen is translated "shepherd" in every single place except for Ephesians 4:11 where it says, "He gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers." For the purpose of this class I'm going to say "shepherd" at least I'm going to do my best to do it. This will help in the long run to understand what I'm saying.

Also, when I talk about a "gift" or a "gifting" I'm talking about what the Bible, the word in the Greek is charisma which comes from the word charis which is the word for grace. So the giftings that we have are gifts of grace. They're not so much gifts to us, as through us, to the church. It's a gift of the Lord continuing something through your life to the church as a gift to the church. We have these giftings we need to understand.

"Ministry", is from the Greek word diakonia and it is talking about "a service rendered; something that we do." So when I talk about a "ministry" I'm going to try to keep clear what I am saying because so many times I'll say "A gift-ministry." I might say, "Well, this person has a gift-ministry of a prophet." What I'm trying to do is clear up some of these understandings. The gift is, let's say if that person is a prophet, then there's a gift of a prophet there. The "ministry" is only if they are functioning in that gift or how they function in that gift. So, sometimes I just say, "The gift-ministry of..." That's not necessarily accurate, unless they are actually functioning in it. So, for the purposes of this class I want to be very clear on what I mean when I say things.

So in other words a "ministry" is the service that we give or the action that we take in service. We need to understand there is a difference between our purpose, which is our calling, and our position or where we perform what we are hired to do. What do we do for a living? What is our profession? Our position or profession is different than that which we have within us, our purpose.

We have to understand our purpose is not whatever we do for a living, let's say we wash windows or paint houses or engineer a locomotive or work on cars or take care of the home or raise the kids. Those are positions that we hold. What if I'm a minister of God and I pastor a church? That's a position. Now, I may have a gift, let's say I have a gift, okay? And if my gift is that of a shepherd, it's going to be easy for me to let those two things blend together, but they're not the same.

Let's say I'm an evangelist and I have the gift as an evangelist to the church. My life is a gift to the church of an evangelist and let's say I have a television ministry where I evangelize. But, then let's say the Lord calls me to Afghanistan or someplace to go pioneer a church. I've given up that job that I had, that I called the job of an evangelist, but am I still an evangelist? Is my life still a gift to the church as an evangelist? It is.

Let's say I have a television and I'm an evangelist and then I get to where I don't want to do that anymore and I stop and I go to work selling light bulbs or something. Is there anything necessarily wrong with that? No. Am I still going to be an evangelist? Yes. And if I truly have that gift no matter where I am or what I'm doing, I'm going to do that.

How about let's say I'm a teacher. I have the gift of a teacher, the gift of teaching. Let's say I get a job as a teacher, teaching in elementary school. Isn't that great? I'm an elementary school teacher and I have a gift from God of teaching. Am I going to be able to use that gift in that job? Am I going to be able to use my purpose in my position? Yes. It's easy to see that.

But, what if I'm a teacher and I drive a taxi cab. If I have the gift of teaching but I have a position of driving a taxi cab. Am I going to go around sulking the rest of my life or am I going to just teach because that's where I am. Where I am is where I need to manifest that gift.

These are the kind of things we need to talk about. I really got put into this position of searching in this area and beginning to pull down strongholds in my own life because of some things that happened in my church and area. Many of the things that now come to easy to me that I can teach others, I have had to learn the hard way. It wasn't that I wanted to learn the hard way, there just was nobody to teach me. So we just did it and kept plugging away. When we seemed to have some set-backs, we just kept going and tried to do it in love.

We had a good thing going there in our church and we invited in a traveling minister who walked in the prophetic and what happened was that one of the deacons was ministered over and had a prophetic word said over him and his wife and there were some others, we all did and it was really wonderful except for when there is not a good understanding sometimes we can take action incorrectly. What happened was this individual believed that I was called to something different than what I was doing. And he said, "I don't know what you are. You're either an apostle or a prophet, but you know you shouldn't be doing this because you're going to wear everybody out taking them these new places, breaking all these strongholds and going over hill and dale like pioneers do and that's not what you should be doing and I should be running things because I'm a pastor." I kind of thought maybe that wasn't right. Certainly I could see the ministry of a shepherd in this man, I always could, I always had, but I very much doubted that all of a sudden something changed that quick just because there way a blessing said or a word said. So therefore, to make a long story short, the church divided because of little things, you know how that happens. It's not the first time that's happened.

I was real circumspect, I'm thankful I was and walked with the Lord and therefore within a short time everybody pretty much was back except for a few and those were scattered. So right there as we discern whereas a true shepherd gathers the flock together and a false shepherd scatters the flock, then it was easy for me to really see who was really shepherding and who wasn't. Because those that stayed there ended up being scattered

and those that were with us were always gathered and cared for and came together. So I could see the blessings of that.

I also found that even in spite of unhappy times, we were able to follow the Lord and He could sort it out. By spending more time in prayer and less time being worried or concerned or going around behind anybody's back. But, this really made me decide to start looking at some of these things, like is there truth to this? Does that mean if you have this gift you can serve in that function and somebody else can't? If you have some specific gift are there certain places you can function in a church that others can't?

I want to talk more about my experiences, what I've seen, what I see the Lord doing now, and where I believe the Lord is taking me as well as many others. As this began to have an effect on me I began to look and seek the Lord about these questions. As I looked I found out how many people have written and used the word "pastor" meaning someone that is a shepherd, but we call them a pastor, meaning they are the ones that run the church. Prophets do that. Teachers do that. Deacons do that. They get this from the Bible. I didn't believe what they were writing was what the Lord was showing me, so we have some strongholds. At first as I read and listened to different men of God, great men of God, I couldn't quite put my finger on it, but something didn't fit with my spirit on what the Lord was showing me so I had to dive into it.

The first time I went to India I was asked to function as a prophet in the ministry that I walk in and to lay hands on the ministers that were there and to give them a word. Many times the Lord would speak forth a specific word as to a gifting in their life. Most of them were in the position we call pastor, meaning somebody that runs a church, that oversees a church. So you would assume from that the person would have a gifting of a shepherd. But what I found out very quickly was that if the Lord called out for instance the gifting of an evangelist then this person all of a sudden thought they needed to quit what they were doing and go do something else because in their mind they thought an evangelist travels around the country preaching the gospel, right? Well, an evangelist is somebody that preaches the gospel. It is somebody that brings the Good News, but it doesn't say that when you have that gift what you have to do for a living. So therefore very quickly within a very short time I realized I couldn't do this anymore until I taught about the ministries and the gifts and how they should function. I told them that if I were an evangelist in India I would want to be a taxi cab driver because people would pay to come hear me preach. Then I would be operating miracles and healing in my taxi and they'd tell other people and people would be coming just to drive around. Pretty soon I could afford a taxi cab with air conditioning.

I have a great friend of mine who has a medical clinic and he is a great man of God. He's reconciled and very comfortable in the fact that God has called him to work in that field and yet he has a great gifting. He was recently talking to me about how a pastor came to him for advice and set up an appointment with his secretary and went back into the doctor's office and sat there and talked and got the advice during business hours. When he went to leave my friend said, "See you later." The pastor said, "I want to pay for this." "You don't have to pay for this." "Oh, yes I do." "Well, okay. Go tell the secretary." So he

paid. That's good. That's honest. He paid him the regular wage. He didn't come for his physical body, but he got good advice because that's one of the things my friend does. He operates in that. Praise the Lord.

Why can't we do things a little different than we've done them in the past and still have everybody get blessed. Because God wants everybody to be blessed in the body. We need to allow Him to show us new ways of doing old things so that we can have new results. I heard somebody one time give a definition of insanity. It is "continuing to do the same thing over and over expecting different results." Isn't that what we do sometimes, well, I'm going to do the same thing but this time it's going to work or this time it will be different. No. Let's just figure it's not going to have new results until we do it differently. Let's just think that maybe there are things in our churches we can change and it won't be heresy to say that. There are things we can leave that are working great, but let's maybe go to God and say, "Okay, what can we do?" Maybe we should just start off by saying, "Is everything perfect? Or could we improve?" and see what He says. As I joke and say that I hope nobody thinks I am criticizing. I'm joking and trying to make light.

Ephesians 4:11 says, It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be (I'm going to say shepherds because I'm not going to talk about a position here, but I want to talk about a purpose. I'm not going to talk about a way of employment, I'm going to talk about a calling and a gifting, okay? I'm not saying they can't be one and the same, but I want to separate that.) (pastors) shepherds and teachers, (12) to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up (13) until (Until, this is how long we need these things going, this is how long this process will continue.) until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Have we gotten there? Do you know anybody that's gotten there? Have you ever heard of anybody that's gotten there, except for Jesus? No. So wouldn't that then tell us that all five of these giftings are still around somewhere, or they should be, right? I don't know if you've heard that after the apostles died off in the early church that there weren't any more. Or after the prophets died off there weren't any more. Or the prophets now days aren't like the prophets in the Old Testament because they're different. Well, they dress different, but if it is a spirit of prophecy in the Old Testament there is a spirit of prophecy now.

If you have Christ in you that doesn't make you less than John, because Jesus said that John the Baptist was the greatest man ever born of woman. Still the least in the Kingdom of God is greater than him. That is us! So the least of us is still greater than him. Why is that? Because I think John was a pretty great guy. Because we have Christ in us, he didn't. He had the spirit of Elijah. Jesus said it was Elias that had already come. He had the spirit of Elijah on him, just like Elisha had the spirit of Elijah, but double. We have Christ in us. We have that Spirit that descended upon Him like a dove when He was baptized by John and He kept that same Spirit through obedience right to the end.

It says in Luke 20:35 ...in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage and we have that Spirit that He had in the resurrection. So we in a sense have a resurrected spirit, it is a different spirit than the spirit of Elijah, it is a different spirit than the spirit of Moses that was taken from Moses in Numbers chapter 11. Thank God for that so even the least of us is greater than that. We ought to be able to do at least what they did.

Verse 8 says, ...When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men.(That's what it says in NIV. I can quote it from the King James because I've read it so many times, When he ascended upon on high, He led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men.) But anyway, He gave gifts unto men, that's referring to the Holy Spirit that was given and with that Holy Spirit there are empowerments that are also given.

Look in 1 Corinthians 12:4-6. There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, (or ministry) but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working (or empowerments), but the same God works all of them in all men. So you see a breaking down here. The gifts and the Spirit. The ministries and the Lord and everything come from the Father. All the empowerments come from the Father and originate from His love, but you see when we receive the Holy Spirit there were gifts with that Holy Spirit. Those gifts we have and they are enabled in our lives through the working of that Holy Spirit. In a sense I like to say that the Lord Jesus is Lord over the church, but that the Holy Spirit is Lord in the church. Of course God is Lord overall. Because as David said, "My lord said unto the Lord..." We have to understand that.

1 Corinthians 12:4-6 breaks down and separates the gift from the workings, the ministries are separate from the gifts. They are not one and the same. We can go into ministry through a gift and have our gift working wherever we happen to be. What we need to do is pull down strongholds as to what it is that we do for our profession and what it is that we were called to do that is our purpose.

There is a difference between a "calling" and a "commissioning." Many are called, but few are chosen. The choosing part is the entering into, the commissioning of. David was called to be king when he was about thirteen years old. Samuel came and told David's father to bring all his sons in and he did all except for one. Remember David wrote in the Psalms, though I am rejected by my father and my mother.... I still will not ever be rejected by You... Do you think David might have felt bad that he was always out there with the sheep and everybody else got to be home and then when the prophet came and wanted to see all Jesse's kids, David's still not around and so finally Samuel said, "Don't you have any more kids?" Jesse said, "Oh, yeah. I have one more, a little scrawny guy out there." "Go get him." He brings David in and Samuel anoints him with oil and calls him out to be king over Israel. Even after he was called out to be king his brothers still kind of treated him like he is a scrawny little kid, a little servant boy. It was many years before he walked in that anointing. He didn't just quit his job as a shepherd and all of a sudden go looking for a castle to live in.

There was time between his calling and his commissioning. We need to understand that with ourselves. If we are called out and we know that the Lord has called us, and He shows us that He has called us to something and we need to walk in that and allow Him to begin to teach us and let that manifest and give in those areas to the church. We are responsible to God for those giftings, not for any other person. As we give in those areas, there will come a time when it becomes recognized, when it becomes a commissioning. But, we need to understand, who knows how long, for David it was almost thirty years from the time of that anointing and that calling to where he was fully commissioned and really entered fully in as far as that "profession" of king.

How long will it be for us? I don't know, but by understanding that, it will make it much easier on ourselves. If you are called from the womb to be a painter you don't start that day. John the Baptist was called from the womb to be a prophet to go before the Lord. I don't think he started that job, well, John's kind of different, he started when he was still in the womb. I'd better not use him for an example because he got his mom to prophesy. The point is that he wasn't walking fully in his ministry for many years.

Jesus grew strong in the Spirit, but it wasn't until He was baptized and received the Holy Spirit that He began to walk in His giftings. Even then He didn't walk in the ministry fully until He came back of the hills. Put yourself in Jesus' place, thirty years you've been waiting, you go and get baptized, you know you don't have much time left now and you have to redeem all mankind and the first thing the Holy Spirit tells you is to head to the wilderness. Now for me that would be a temptation, alright, just let me grab my rifle. For some of you it would be a fishing pole or golf clubs, but Jesus was obedient and He spent the first forty days of a very short ministry on earth alone in the wilderness. But He was obedient.

How long will it be for us as we start to empower and equip? I don't know, but we start to use our giftings as soon as we can.

I like to use the example of Smith Wigglesworth. I think you know who he was. He was one of the founders of the Pentecostal movement. He was a plumber until he was about forty-eight years old. He never called himself an apostle, but I believe he had that gift. But, regardless of whether he did or not he had giftings which he used. I believe he used those as a Christian plumber even before the Lord called him to full-time ministry. Then you could have said he was in full-time ministry as a minister of God and you could have called him whichever gift he may have had, but he had it the day before he quit his job, too. He told the Lord, "If I get out here working for You and I start getting holes in my shoes, I'm going back to be a plumber." That's what he told the Lord. That was the deal. He never got holes in his shoes. The point is if he had gone back he still would have had the same giftings. I'm glad he didn't go back we have some great things in our Christian heritage because of the example of his life and the breakthroughs that he and his movement made for us today. So I thank God for that.

Romans 11:29 says, ...for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable. That's pretty good. ...for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance, I think the King James says. In other

words, you can't give them back. You can't repent from them. If you have a gift or a calling (that's the word *charis*), a gift of grace, if you have that you can't give it back. God won't take it back. It is irrevocable. But, can we let it sit dormant? Yes.

Look in 1 Timothy 3. (I like the NIV here.) It is a gift of grace and calling of God are irrevocable. They can't be repented of. They are a gift. Okay, 1 Timothy 3:1 says, Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer (King James and New King James says "bishop" but there is a reason I like "overseer".), he desires a noble task (It's a noble thing.)

Now, King James I think says if you desire the opposite of Bishop you desire a good work. Well, is there a difference between a good work and a gift of God's grace? Yes. There's a big difference. Well, wait a minute. What are we talking about here? We're talking about a bishop or an overseer. We're talking about somebody in the position of what we call a pastor. We're not talking about the word "shepherd" for gifts, I'm talking about a pastor.

You can pick up any number of book or tapes on the subject of gifts in the church and ministries in the church and they will say the words for overseer, for elder, for ruler, for bishop are synonymous with the word *poimen* for shepherd which is pastor. The word translated "bishop" or here in the NIV "overseer" is the word *episkopos*. The word for "elder" is the word *presbuteros*. We get the word Presbyterian for one and Episcopal for the other. One has bishops and the other has elders. The point is that those words are interchangeable but when you get to the word shepherd which is translated pastor in that one place they are not interchangeable. I don't believe they are interchangeable. I believe that many times they are similar, but the reason we have gotten into trouble, especially with the ministry of a shepherd that we call a pastors is because we take the chief elder, which is in the Bible, it talks about chief elders, and we call that person a pastor regardless of whether they are a prophet or a teacher or an evangelist or God forbid maybe an apostle. We use that word "pastor" because we've been taught that it is interchangeable with these other things so we automatically think that we limit ourselves to one gifting for that position. That is a position called "eldership" or "leadership" or "rulership" or called "overseeing." One key comes when you do look at the word shepherd, *poimen*, even in the English.

I want to tell you a story. It scared me at the time. I was in a meeting in Missoula with our pastors and a number of us who get together for prayer and share day. Actually we do it at least once a week now, some of us more often, but we were in a meeting and sometimes I say things I shouldn't, but sometimes the Lord makes me say things that I don't understand. I don't know whether or not you understand what I'm saying, but it is true for me. And I began to speak and I said, "Do you realize that there is not a single place in the Bible where it talks about a pastor?" Everybody looked at me and I thought, "Oh, my goodness. I'm glad I'm closest to the door." That's exactly what I thought. I said, "There never is. It's always plural. It's always elders, bishops, overseers, pastors. It's never singular, except in one place where it talks about THE Shepherd, Jesus Christ. Every other place it is always plural." Then I thought, I'd better keep going here to find

out what I'm supposed to learn here, what we're all supposed to find out. So I said, "And another thing, there's not a single place in the Bible where you can find a church called a church just here or there, but there is THE church in Corinth. THE church in Ephesus. THE church in Rome." And I said, "So therefore, if you were to look at us as the chief elder of each of our congregations and all of our congregations being THE church of Missoula, then you could look at us as the elders of the church of Missoula." They went whew.

We have one great brother who is kind of like the spokesman for the Word. He makes sure it's in here in the Greek and the Hebrew. He said, "You know what? That's biblical. That's right." I learned something. I think we all did, but I learned something because the Lord understands this. He wrote it.

This is a joke we do: One day we were talking about the Bible, and somebody was saying, "You know God said everything in the black." Then somebody said, "Yes and Jesus said everything in the red." Then somebody said, "What did the Holy Spirit say?" "Everything in the white." In order to understand the red and the black we need to have the white interpreted. That's the Holy Spirit. He's the one who shows us those things. That's exactly what happened on that day. He took things that were in the Word that I had never pieced together, that puzzle -- the Greek word calls it coming together sunantesi an understanding. In this case it happened to be an understanding for a number of us. I was real blessed by that. I enjoyed that because it is true. The eldership is supposed to work together. It's never supposed to be alone. Now within your congregation do you need five guys in charge or can there be one chief elder? I personally believe there can be one chief elder that you call a pastor if you want, but I certainly hope that he will associate with other chief-elders so he is not alone because he gets in trouble when he's alone. We need eldership. I think there is a reason why the Bible sets that. There are elderS in the church. Not AN elder over the church except for THE elder Jesus Christ, the first born of all creation. That makes Him the elder.

You can read this here in 1 Timothy 3:1...If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer,(or a bishop) he desires a noble task (He desires a good work.) (2) Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, (It has a whole list of things, qualifications for eldership. Qualification for rulership. If you have an elder or ruler over you, don't you want them to meet some criteria? I do. I don't want just anybody coming off the street coming in and telling me they are my leader now.

Look in Titus 1:5. It says, The reason I left you in Crete is that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town. I think the King James and New King James says, "Set in order and ordain elders in every church." Do you know what "ordain" means? To call out, to set in order, to place in order, to put things right.

I had a good friend of mine that I respect very much as a mentor and a pastor for his giftings. He asked me one time, "What gives you the right to ordain?" (Because I talked about ordaining elders in India and other places and ordained gifts in people's lives, etc.

and setting them in the church.) He said, "What gives you the right?" He always knew he was on shaky ground because that's what the Pharisees always asked Jesus so we kind of laughed. I said, "Well, first off the state of Montana. That gives me the right with them because I have that right as a minister, but I don't ordain that way. I believe there are different ordinations in the Bible." I did a sharing one time on Hebrews 6 where it talks about the primary doctrines, the foundational doctrines, of the Christian church. It talks about the Doctrine of Baptisms, the Doctrine of Laying On Of Hands, etc. and as I read that one day and I thought, "These are foundational doctrines. I don't know if I understand them." For instance, what is the doctrine of laying on of hands? So I began to look and I found seven different reasons for laying on of hands in the Bible. The reason I could find seven and not six or five is I see two different types of ordinations in the Bible. Two different types of setting people into their service. One of them I see is an ordination or setting straight or a calling out or a setting in order of a gift. The gifts and the calling of God are without repentance. They are irrevocable. But then another one is what you see here in Timothy and Titus where it says to ordain elders. But, these have requirements. Those are a different kind of ordination. Those are an ordination towards a service and they have requirements that you earn.

In 1 Timothy 3:12 it talks about deacons, A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well. (13) Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and a great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus. And on and on it goes. I go into more detail in other things I have taught. But the point I'm trying to show is there are two different kinds of ordinations that I see. One is to a gifting and the other is to a service in the church. I call those two giftings, just to make it easy for people to see as a "Prophetic Ordination" or an "Organizational Ordination." I would not have any right to come into somebody's church and ordain somebody as an "overseer" or a "deacon."

I'm going to pray a blessing over somebody and the Lord speaks a prophecy through me that this person is going to be a deacon. That could be a prophecy in terms of foretelling, but without the permission of the leadership and rulership, the administration, of that church, I wouldn't have the right to do that, would I? Because I'm not going to be there to administrate or to train. I don't know if that person, the Lord knows that, but, the point is that these things you need to earn, you walk into. He who desires the office of a bishop, he who desires that ministry of an overseer desires a good thing, a noble task, a good work.

But look in Romans 1:1, Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God, (Does it imply any kind of requirements? What requirements did Paul meet to become an apostle? He was called. He didn't have a choice. The only requirement he made was to receive the Holy Spirit and when he received the Holy Spirit he received the gift of the Holy Spirit and also the gifting God had with that. The Lord sent it to him and later ordained it. Now I believe Paul had, and knew he had, that gifting from the minute he got knocked off his horse. Or at least he had it and he learned about it very quickly. But, it wasn't until later.

Look in Acts 13 In Romans it said he was called and set apart. That setting apart or calling out from could be referring to a different thing like setting apart when he went and worked in it because he didn't right at first. First he went to Arabia and then he went to Tarsus where he was from and he probably just worked there. Was he still called to be the things he was called to be? Did he already have the giftings? Yes. It was taking time and he was working those things. I know Paul and I know from the Word how he didn't do anything half way so I'm sure while he was there in Tarsus he was putting himself wholeheartedly into those callings and understanding what it was he was supposed to do and how would he do it the best way he could. I know he didn't know everything, but he knew enough to get started.

Barnabas came down and called him and took him up to Antioch. If Barnabas hadn't come and gotten him he would have never gotten to Antioch because they were a little suspicious of this guy. But, because Barnabas said, "I'm going to vouch for you so come on Paul." They went up there and they received Paul because of Barnabas and because of his reputation.

Look in Acts 13:1. In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger (which means "black", okay?), Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. (2) While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called (past tense, called) them." They were already called before this happened. They were already called to a work even though they weren't working in it yet. How long? Different periods of time. Barnabas had begun to walk in it already. He'd been sent down from Jerusalem. Saul was just coming into it. (3) So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. That's apostolos the word we get the word "apostle" from. They sent them out. The word "apostle" means a sent one; someone sent off to complete a task.

So they were worshiping and fasting. The Holy Spirit spoke and said, "Separate them for the work I have called them to." and then it says, "after they have fasted and prayed." So they were worshiping and fasting and they switched from worshiping and fasting to fasting and praying. They don't eat much at this church. They were having a great time and they sent them off.

Then verse 4 says, The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. (5) When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues.

Okay, it says in verse 3 that after they fasted and prayed they placed their hands on them and sent them off. Then it says in verse 4 the two of them were sent on their way by the Holy Spirit. In verse 3 it says they were sent off by the church and in verse 4 it says the Holy Spirit sent them off. Now which is it? Is that a contradiction? I think it's both. I think that back in those days they did something. They coordinated their efforts with the Holy Spirit. They did the things He told them to do, when He told them to do them, not before and not after, but as. Even though He called them out before, now He says it is

time to commission. How much time is it going to take between the calling and the commissioning? I don't know. It might be different for different people. The point is they're not exactly at the same time. Even the Apostle Paul had to be commissioned and sent from that church. Paul was from Antioch. That was his base. He was from Tarsus, but as an apostle he was sent from Antioch, the church in Antioch. He would come back there and check back in. Do you know that he was not an apostle to Antioch. He was an apostle from Antioch. When he got back there they still accepted his gifting, but he was not an apostle to the church in Antioch. He was sent from the church in Antioch. He probably came back and met with these elders time and time again as his mentors and as his overseers as they sent him forth. Praise God.

But, they were called and now they were commissioned and they were sent off and it was only from this point on that Paul is known as the apostle. Before that he was known as Paul of Tarsus or Saul of Tarsus. Even though I believe he had that gifting right from the time he got knocked off his horse, he never was called that. Some people may have known he had the gifting, but he wasn't commissioned to the job until this point then he received that title. Doesn't that tell us a few things about ourselves. Doesn't that give us a little bit of peace, maybe if we know we're called. I'm telling you almost every place I go the Lord brings me to people that just know they're called. They just know it and that's good because they are. But, we can help empower and equip and send forth and send out and to train up. If we know what our giftings are and other people know what our giftings are then we can prepare to put those into practice. We can take our purpose and put our purpose into practice. I think that's what God wants us to do He wants every one of His children equipped and sent out to that work they are called to do.

Turn to 1 Timothy 3 again. In the first verse it says, Here is a trustworthy says: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task... Or a good work, a work that you work into, something you prove yourself worthy of; which is a difference than a gift of God's grace and a gifting. If you'll read 1 Timothy 1, if you'll read Titus chapter 1, if you'll read 2 Peter 5 where it talks about eldership roles and leadership roles, you cannot find a single place in any of those places where it really requires any gifting whatsoever. In 1 Peter it talks about feeding and shepherding, but you don't see in these places where it has requirements in Timothy and Titus, even implied whatsoever, but yet you have these requirements you must meet before you can come into an eldership role, overseer role, or deacon.

In 1 Timothy 3:10 it talks about deacons. It says, They must first be tested; (or proved) and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. The New King James I think says, "If they're blameless, then go ahead and approve them." We all ought to try to be blameless, it doesn't say sinless. Nobody can be sinless except for the Lord, but to be blameless. Zacharias said, "He was blameless." That's what we should strive for, but these guys have to be or they're not qualified for that role, right? So they need to get into that position and we need to approve you.

Look at an example of the deacons in Acts 6:1. In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic

Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. Some people say that's because they were prejudiced against the Greeks and they were Jewish. It could have been that or it could have been because they didn't speak Greek and so there was a complication here. We don't know for sure. It could have been a racial thing. It's hard to say. The point is they were getting missed. There were murmurings going on. (2) So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. (3) Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. (So these are some of the requirements we see for deacons, full of the Spirit and wisdom.) We will turn this responsibility over to them (4) and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." That's really what we should have our top leadership into in the church, it's not mowing the grass, not painting the church, even not counseling, really, but prayer and ministry of the word. It didn't say in the Bible anyplace to take the gospel to all the lands and counsel everyone. It says to make disciples of the nations. That's the jobs we should be putting ourselves to.

If you'll look in the early church they didn't do a lot of counseling. They'd roll into town, preach the Word, teach the Word, get a few (for instance I'm thinking of Philippi.) Get a few ladies saved down there where prayers want to be made and then keep on preaching the Word until, you know your vision said there is a man from Macedonia saying, "Come on over" (Acts 16:9) So you keep preaching until you find that man.

It happens after you cast a demon out of the woman who made much money for her owners by soothsaying (Acts 16:16). So they throw you in prison. (Acts 16:24...) There you are in prison so you're praising God and singing hymns and at midnight an earthquake comes and unlocks all the doors. I always like those kind of earthquakes. The jailer is going to kill himself and they say, "Don't do yourself any harm. We're all still here." I was wondering how he knew that because it was dark in there. The next verse (verse 29) says it was dark, The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. Obviously it was dark. How did Paul know they were all still there? He was obedient and he listened. (Verse 30) ...so the man asked, "What must I do to be saved?" How did he know anything about it? Because he was listening to them singing and praising. He'd been indirectly witnessed to already through their songs. Then they went home with him and he cleaned them up and he and his whole household were saved and baptized that night. Verse 35, When it was daylight, the magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order: "Release those men." (36) The jailer told Paul, "The magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released. Now you can leave. Go in peace." (37) But Paul said to the officers: "They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out." (Didn't he know he was a Roman citizen the day before? Did he forget that? I mean, he had his card. It said, "Paul, I'm a citizen of Rome bought with a great price." He knew that and did you know it was illegal for a Roman citizen to be beat or have any kind of torture like that, any kind of punishment without first going to trial? If you had accomplished that upon somebody, if you had beat someone, if you had put judgment on to someone and they were a Roman citizen and you did that without proper trial then you had to succumb to that same

judgment. So that meant everyone of those magistrates had to now succumb to thirty-nine lashings. You can bet they were being nice to him then. That's why it says in verse 39 They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city. Why didn't Paul say something the day before? Did it slip his mind? I'd think he'd remember after the first lash. That's just how obedient Paul was. God said, "Zip your lip. I'm going to have you do something." He reached that one man, the jailer and his household. The next day they left and went to Thessalonica.

They began a work in Thessalonica. Do you know what happens? Time goes by and he writes a letter to this little church that was birthed in Philippi. It's called the book of Philippians. He writes back and says, in Philippians 4:16...for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need. We have people that have been in church for forty years that don't tithe. How come this guy is a Christian for half a night and he's sending help to Paul to start another church. What is it they use to do back then? What is it they use to do to get these guys committed like that, that we haven't been able to do? I really think that's a good question.

We're talking about these deacons. We don't want to neglect the ministry of the Word. We want to give our attention to prayer and ministry of the Word. You see he disciplined that man. He got him on the right track. He commended him to the Lord Jesus right away. He didn't counsel him. He didn't have enough time. Remember that guy was a pagan. He didn't grow up in a Christian country. He knew more about Zeus probably than he did Jesus and yet look at what it did because he had some time and was introduced to the Holy Spirit and was commended to the Lord Jesus. That's what they did in the early church and it worked. That's what we need to do. We need to understand how to do that. Not counseling forever. Sometimes that is necessary, but I'm trying to make a point. There are other things that are in the Word that we're not doing. That are in the example that we see here that we're not doing, that we haven't learned how to do. Those are the things that are more needful.

They took the whole group and in verse 5, ...they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. There were seven of them. The point I'm trying to make is that these are deacons and in Timothy we are talking about them having to first be proven. Look at the caliber of men.

You feel you have a gift. You feel you have a calling and you want to bring that calling into service in the church and so you come to the elders or the pastor, the overseer, the one you call the pastor, you come to him and say, "I want to use my j He says, "Okay, we can really use some help before the service vacuuming." "Well, I'm not going to do that. I'm called to teach and preach. I don't want to vacuum." Many, many men and women that have a valid calling have gotten offended because they don't want to do anything else. They don't want to prove themselves. If you want to just go manifest your gifts somewhere, then just go someplace and manifest it. But, if you want to be in the church, then there is this eldership and rulership and deaconship, etc. that we prove ourselves. Well, you lay hands on someone and prophetically the Lord reveals this person is called

to be an apostle. Now all of a sudden he starts bossing the pastor around. It doesn't work that way. But, that has happened. Why? Because we have not been taught, and we haven't taught. We need to understand there is a difference between your calling and your commissioning.

So these guys who were full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, that the requirement. The other five we don't know much about, but Philip and Stephen we know about. Stephen was full of miracles. He did miracles. He preached and was a martyr. He stood there and the Lord Jesus stood up and it doesn't say he died, it says, "He fell asleep." How would you like to die in your sleep and just see the Lord right before you go? That would be a good way to go. But that was Stephen.

Then in Acts 8:4 Philip heads out and goes up to Samaria and the first place he goes to evangelize happens to have this big, I guess we'd call them a witch or a warlock, sorcerer and he had everybody bewitched. This is his first assignment as an evangelist. He goes by himself and yet he did that great work there and there was great joy in that place it says. And they saw the miracles he did, but they he didn't get all puffed up. When he got to the point where his gifting would take him, I guess it was a ministry because it was in operation, then he called for the apostles and they came up. Their job was then to get a church established. They dealt with Simon in a little bit different way, too. Because their job was to get him disciplined too if he wanted to be. Come to think of it, Peter didn't counsel him very much either, did he?

But what I'm trying to say here is in 1 Timothy 3:9 it says...to be tested or proven. These guys were proven. They had been working. That was even before they were deacons. Now they are moving into these deacon roles and guess what they got in the function within the church of doing that hands-on ministry that hands-on feeding the table so to speak, cleaning up the table, they were operating their giftings. They were using their giftings. They didn't get offended because they felt they were too big for that hands-on type of stuff. They moved up and worked themselves into it all the time using their giftings.

Now there are people in the Word of God (Acts 11:28) Agabus. He came down from Jerusalem and he prophesied that there was going to be a great drought. There is probably more about Agabus as a prophet than any other person that we know of in the New Testament that was only a prophet. I believe Paul was a prophet, but he was an apostle, too. So we know a lot about Paul. But anybody that is just called as a prophet in the whole New Testament, we know more about Agabus than anybody. Then in Acts 21:10 Agabus comes down and takes Paul's belt or girdle, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'"

In Acts 15:22 it says, Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, two men who were leaders among the brothers (23) With them they sent the following letter:.. It goes on down and talks about those

guys. In verse 32 it says, Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the brothers. The point I'm trying to make here is: Here you have two prophets Judas and Silas who are also elders. So in other words they had a function in the church, they had a position of eldership, they also had a gifting. It doesn't say they were shepherds. They were not what we would call a pastor. They used the word elder. But the gifting they had was of a prophet. But Agabus it doesn't say any place nor can you imply any place where he was an elder in the church. It doesn't apply anywhere. He was well respected as a prophet, but we don't know what he did for a living. He could have been a shoe salesman. He could have fixed the tires on the chariots. We don't know what he did. The point is he was a well-respected prophet and he was able to travel when he needed to. We don't know what he did for a living, yet he was a prophet. But, he was not an elder. He didn't have a job, a ministry of service in the church as did Judas and Silas. Yet he was happy to walk in the gift that he had which was a prophet.

There are a couple things I want to look at. One of them is in 1 Timothy 3 again. This time I'm going to read it from the New King James because I want to get bishop in here. This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. That's really good wording. A "position" of a bishop. Not the "gift." The position. (2) A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach... So here are all these requirements. Then you have requirements for deacons.

Now Titus 1:5, For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you, (6) if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. (7) For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God... In the NIV I like that "bishop" word I just used as "overseer" because that's what it is. What we've done is since about the fourth century there has been a corruption of that word and we have decided there is a bishop over elders, like you have elders in a church and then you have a bishop over an area who is over the elders. There is a problem with that because you find always that bishop is with other bishops and so in our functioning and in our mind that is not the case. But, biblically it is in the plural, too, just like the elders, the deacons, the overseers. The point I want to make here is the presbuteros which is the elder and the episkopos which is the bishop are the same function or office or position. It's just that they're two Greek words used for the same thing. The first term was used in the Jewish synagogue and the second was used in the Greek community. They understood that where they were writing this, they were two words for the same thing.

You could probably think of some similar words like "doorman" and "usher." Are they two different things? No. These are two different words to describe the same function. "Usher" tells more about the actual function and "Doorman" gives an honor to the name, but it still is the same function.

That's the example I'm trying to make here. It was fine to use the word "bishop" then, but we have corrupted it, it's been used wrong for so long. We have used the word "pastor" so long, even though it is a good biblical word, meaning shepherd in the Old Testament, and

we have it confused with "elder" or "overseer" or "ruler", that when I say "pastor" I have to mean an overseer or some kind. That's why for this class I try to separate that and use "shepherd" because of our understanding. For a while I took "pastor" off of my business card because I felt I should not advertise a gifting but a function. I used the biblical term: "chief elder." It didn't go over very good because then people thought I was just one of the guys on the committee. So, I had to put "pastor" back, so I put "pastor/elder." In other words I was not trying to put a gift on there. I was trying to put a function of where I was because whatever gift I may have is going to be used in that. It didn't work, though, because of our strongholds.

There is not a verse in the Bible that you can find that limits the eldership positions in a church or over a church to any particular gift. There isn't. Let me just give you a couple of examples here. We already saw two prophets, right? Also in Acts 13 we read about in Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers that listened to the Lord and then sent out the Apostles. Then Timothy was told to do the work of an evangelist but you saw Philip the evangelist who was in the eldership role as a deacon. Later you saw him in Caesarea where he more than likely held services in his home because they met there. But, you see that gifting also.

Turn to 1 Peter 5:1 (NIV), To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, (he also is an elder. Peter was what? An apostle, right? So here you have an example of an apostle as an elder. But here's where I mentioned earlier I really want to be) a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: (2) Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers (Because of that and also in Acts 28 where Paul told the elders of Ephesus to feed the flock and to be overseers and to shepherd the flock. Because of those two verses we think they are synonymous, because an elder was told to shepherd. Well, shouldn't an elder shepherd? But, shouldn't an apostle shepherd? Shouldn't a teacher shepherd? Shouldn't we all be shepherding in one form or another? Is that talking about the gift? In other words is that saying that only somebody with the gifting of a shepherd can be an elder? Obviously not. Because we just briefly saw examples of apostles, of teachers, of prophets, and of an evangelist that were in eldership roles. If you want to count Timothy where it says to do the work of an evangelist. He was obviously an elder. But we haven't seen the examples of people with the gift of shepherd, you know the gifting of a shepherd as an elder. Do you know why we haven't seen one? Because there aren't any examples in the bible. There's not a single example. You can look through the whole New Testament and see the shepherding and the eldership and you can see where it says to shepherd, but with the exception of Jesus Himself there's not a single place that points to a person and says, "This person is a shepherd," not by name. I'm not diminishing that office, but what I'm saying is our mind-set that this "elder" or "overseer" or even if you want to say "chief elder" has to be the "gift" of a shepherd, is incorrect. Now they may have the gift of a shepherd, they may have the gift of a teacher, but what we found is that more people are coming to a misunderstanding of what we have had for years is man in the oversight that were prophets that didn't really want to say it because they thought they might not be able to hold that job anymore. But, they were called there.

Paul for three and a half years in Ephesus was the overseer of that church. Later, Timothy was the overseer of that church in that city. We have limited ourselves and so thereby we have limited God's ability to work.

In 1 Corinthians 12:31 (KJV) says, Covet earnestly the best gifts but I show unto you a more excellent way. Covet earnestly the best gifts. Which gift do we need in our leadership? Which ever one we need. The best gift. Whatever type of area you have. What's the call for your area? What are the strongholds there? What needs to be pulled down? What needs to be built up? "Covet earnestly the best gifts." That's what we ought to have: the best gifts, whichever ones God says we need. I think it's kind of nice to have them all in one way or the other. I'm trying to say, "We need to break down our strongholds in our limits on God because of our teachings over the years and because of the things we've built which are not really shown to us in the Word of God."

As a matter of fact, where those deacons were told that they should be waiting on tables, right? Which meant they were called to feed the people, right? If anything those guys are the closest thing you find to someone that's named that's working in an office of a shepherd in terms of feeding, feeding the flock, that could have been literal or it could have been figurative. But, that's the closest we have, those deacons.

Let's take a look at some different verses here: For instance I mentioned feeding the flock, the elders shepherd and feed the flock, etc. Really all the gifts feed the flock. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, teachers, they all feed the flock, but we feed them in different ways. Take a look in 1 Corinthians 4:15, Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. (16) Therefore I urge you to imitate me. So here Paul as an apostle is telling the church in Corinth, "You have a lot of instructors. You have a lot of people helping you out, but you have one father." So an apostle in that sense feeds or tends with a father's heart. He shows forth the father's heart. That's one way that an apostle tends or feeds.

Look at prophet. Jeremiah 23:18 says, But which of them has stood in the council of the Lord to see or hear his word? Who has listened and heard his word? (22) But if they had stood in my council, they would have proclaimed my words to my people... One way a prophet tends or feeds people is with a counsel of the Lord. The prophet is supposed to speak forth and to feed the people that counsel which he receives from the Lord.

Teacher. Acts 18:26 says, He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately. In other words, Apollos was teaching, but he wasn't teaching the full understanding so Aquila and Priscilla took him home and taught him more accurately. So teachers will tend or feed the flock with greater understanding or enumeration.

Evangelists. Acts 8:8 says, So there was great joy in that city. You see evangelists tend or feed with the Good News. Evangelist comes from the word euaggelizo which means to

preach the Good News. The Good News is the gospel. You take eulogeo and you take the word for gospel and you put them together and you get the word for evangelist. That means someone that preaches the Good News. The Good News is not just nice things, the Good News is Jesus and what He has accomplished. Wherever an evangelist preaches there is always great joy. That doesn't always happen when prophets preach. But, when the evangelist preaches, think about it. The evangelist is called to preach the Good News and he is used to bring in to the family those that have not received the Lord, he is receiving the Good News of Christ. So when they hear this Good News they say, "Man, I want that." But, you take an evangelist and you put him in front of a church where it is all filled with Christians and he still gets people to come down front because it's Good News. People want it! The prophet has people on their faces or sometimes throwing things at him, it depends upon the people, I suppose.

But, do you see what I'm saying? He's a messenger. The prophet's a messenger, but the evangelist is also a messenger and he feeds us with the Good News. That's what he's gifted with. It brings great joy.

Look at shepherds. How do they feed or tend? Look in Isaiah 40:11. He tends his flock like a shepherd; He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young. That's how a shepherd feeds or tends. I read that from the NIV which says tends. The King James or New King James says feed instead of tends. All those giftings are going to be feeding in some form or fashion. It has nothing to do with the job. Now you may have that gifting more energized because you have them in a position where that's what they do and not other things. That's great. But, we need to understand that all those giftings are going to feed in some way. We all feed in some way or another. The point is not that we feed, it is how do we do it? We need a balanced diet. But, what we've done is limit ourselves on who feeds us and how they feed us so therefore we've kind of got over grazed in many parts of our lives and many parts of the body of Christ. We sort of stayed in one area and we've over grazed, not gotten a balanced diet.

I believe a shepherd is to lead and carry and take. Where do they carry? Where do they lead? To different pasture. Look in John 10:7. Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep." So who's the door? Jesus. We have a sheep fold where they put the sheep at night and there was a doorway. Jesus is saying that He is the door. (8) "Who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. (9) I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture." There was a time in my life where I just thought Jesus was just the wage of salvation, the door in. But, I didn't know He was the door that swung both ways, He said, go in and out and find pasture. He is also the Lord of fellowship. He is also the Lord that you go in and out through to access with the Father. It's not just a one-time thing. This is a process. He's that door.

Let's back up a little bit. John 10:1, "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. (You have to enter through Jesus.) But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the

sheep. (3) To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice. The NIV says the "gatekeeper" and the King James says the "porter." The point I want to make is to show you the porter, the gatekeeper, they are the worker of the door that lets you in and out, right? Does that sound like a job? It sounds like somebody that does something, right? It doesn't mention what ministry they have or what gifting they have. The shepherd is with the sheep and he comes in and goes out. But, the shepherd and the doorkeeper are not the same person. The shepherd is a gift of taking to pasture and back to the Lord. It's a guiding hand whereas the doorkeeper is representing an eldership role, an overseer, somebody that has a job there and makes sure something's done at the church in the organization in the administration. He might be a shepherd, but he might not be. He could just be a full-time usher, doorkeeper or doorman.

Look in Mark 13:32, But of that day and hour no one knows, nor even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. (33) Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. (34) It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, (I want you to see this. He gave authority to his servants so every one of his servants has authority.) and to each his work (Each one of those servants has an assignment), and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. (In other words all of the servants had authority. All of the servants had a calling or a work to perform, but this doorkeeper, this watchman was the one that had to watch. In other words those that were called specifically to stand on the wall and watch were the ones that stood on the wall to watch. He once again is making a distinction here. We all as servants have authority. We all as servants have our job to do and some of us will take time on the wall. It's possible we all may take a turn on the wall as a watchman, as a herald, as a call to look for the enemy to come in, but maybe not. But, when it's our time, watch. Whoever's on the wall, watch. In a sense the eldership are in a position of watching. Remember the shepherds watched over their flock by night. There is a good example. But also, the prophets are called to be watchmen.

Look in Ezekiel 22:30 says, "So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. (31) Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds (He couldn't find an intercessor.) on their own heads," says the Lord God. He couldn't find an intercessor so the intercessors were on the wall to herald, to call.

Look in Ezekiel 33:1. Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, (2) "Son of man, speak to the children of your people, and say to them: 'When I bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from their territory and make him their watchman, (3) when he sees the sword coming upon the land, if he blows the trumpet and warns the people, (4) then whoever hears the sound of the trumpet and does not take warning, if the sword comes and takes him away, his blood shall be on his own head. It goes on and on. If he warns them and they don't listen, then the blood's on their head. The point is there is a position there, that porter, the watchman on the wall, the people put him there and that person may be a shepherd, he may be a prophet, he may be who knows what. The point is that in that position he is a watchman, a herald. Certainly many times

God has to call prophets because the watchmen aren't doing their job so He calls up prophets and gives them that dirty work and they get in trouble like Jeremiah did.

Those are positions that need to be filled and whatever gifting you have, you'll use, I hope. But, what we've done is we've kind of blurred these. We've blurred the distinctions and we need to get this more clear in our minds because the whole reason for all this is so we can all get busy with the work of the ministry. So we can have the work done and not be trying to claim our territory and say, "Don't do MY thing. That's MY thing."

Remember the story of Jesus being taken to the temple to be dedicated and Simeon met them there and he spoke a prophecy over them? But, then Anna the Prophetess came out. Why didn't she get to prophecy? She was the prophet, not him. But, she didn't get upset. She went around and told everything that Simeon had said. It was obvious that God brought Simeon there. He brought him down there and said, "Hey the Redeemer is down there." He promised Simeon that he would see the Deliverer before he died. He got to say the word. Anna didn't get mad.

Another interesting thing is that any Bible course you take, pretty much, or any Bible class you take is pretty much going to teach you that there were no prophets between Malachi and John the Baptist. But, they forget about Anna. Why is that? I don't know. Could it be that we also underestimate allowing women to walk in ministry? Is that very possible? I do repent for that because I see Anna there. I feel she is just as much a prophet because she walks in that ministry as any man. Just because she had a couple ss's at the end. I think we need to take a new and better look at some of the giftings that God gives to women. Now I understand that in the kingdom there is no difference in gender and there is a difference in gender in this world. I'm not saying there isn't a difference. What I am saying is I think we need to walk in a little bit more love and get rid of some of our wrong thinking and to be more clear that we need to equip the saints, all of them. But anyway Anna was there. So there was at least one prophet. There was at least one gifted individual with the gift of prophecy that was between Malachi and John. Just thought you'd like to know that.

In terms of the five giftings, I tried to put a one-word label to each of them just to give a small description of each of them. Here's what I wrote:

An Apostle establishes.

A Prophet confirms.

A Teacher strengthens.

An Evangelist heralds.

A Shepherd gathers.

So those things I think give us a one-word description of each of those giftings, but none of those giftings tells us specifically whether we can or can't walk in an eldership role. If you want to check the Greek words with the Strong's Concordance, look at the word *sterizo* is the Greek word that could be translated "establish in every place" and you will always find an apostle nearby or God Himself.

Then you have *epi sterizo* which means *sterizo* again to do it again, to reestablish or establish it twice. There are four places in the New Testament where that is used. You will see a prophet ministry working there.

Then you have *sterizo* which means to strengthen. If you look up that word you see the teacher. So you'll see an apostle coming in and establishing something and then you'll see a prophet come in and confirm it or reestablish it and then to strengthen it with the ministry of a teacher. You can see that throughout the book of Acts. I think it's very interesting. So we do have giftings functioning like that, but not all those things prove that they have to be an elder or not be an elder. Things can be confirmed by prophets regardless of what position they may hold. A prophet confirms something in your life, you really don't mind if they're a plumber or a painter or an elder in the church as long as they are accurate and they're walking with the Lord.

Paul, working with his hands as a tent maker, those people in that church didn't mind so much that he was working with his hands, he was a tent maker rather than a full-time elder in the church because he was an apostle establishing a work. You see, the gifts and the positions are not always going to overlap. There's no guarantee that a gift is going to guarantee you a full-time job in a church. Sometimes we forget that, especially if we are called to the shepherd ministry. We forget and we think all of a sudden and I'm saying this to instruct because I have seen men and women called into that service that think they need to leave their job now and take over a church. In the story I told earlier where a man who had been a help somewhat and so on felt that he was called to a job and not to a gift. That was wrong. It kind of did a lot of people wrong and certainly him because of his misunderstanding. We need to understand that. We can walk and we should walk and we as leaders should equip people to walk in their giftings. We should know the giftings of each other so that we can help draw that out, stir it up. That's what we need to do. I think we are heading in that direction in the church because the Lord wants the job done. He wants us to be equipped fully and to be raised up into the fullness of whom He is and what He has.