



# Northside Proclaimer

*Proclaiming The Word Of The Lord*

1 Thessalonians 1.8

**Northside Church Of Christ Welcomes You!**

**Jan. 11, 2015**

## **“Pastor Bryan”**

*Bryan Garlock*

I’ve heard this time and time again. I believe every preacher has. It’s no secret that the majority of religious people today refer to preachers as pastor, priest, father, reverend, Dr., etc. I will admit, at first glance, that the title “Pastor Bryan” seems harmless and at best, complimentary of me and my chosen profession. For anyone who devotes his life to the gospel, it only seems right to give such a person an appropriate title. We certainly do this in other professions, for example, “Dr. Tony.”

While there is a way that seems right (cf. Prov. 16.25), to be pleasing to the Lord we must test all things and hold fast to what is good (cf. 1 Thess. 5.21). Therefore, it is only right that we test such a seemingly harmless practice of using religious titles in light of Scripture. To do so, let’s define our terms.

There are actually many terms found within Scripture that help us to identify and define the word “Pastor.” Peter penned, “[s]o I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight (“serving as overseers” NKJV), not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock” (1 Peter 5.1-3, ESV).

You’ll notice above in the same passage Peter uses the word “elders” he uses the word “overseers.” This is because the two are synonymous. An overseer is one who exercises oversight, much like a guardian would do.

Another passage worth examining is found in Acts 20. Paul begins by addressing the elders of the church (v17). Then, interestingly, Paul switches the terms by calling them overseers. “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them” (vv28-30). *Continued on back...*

Northside  
*church Of Christ*

25 Greenfield Pike  
Hillsboro, OH 45133

churchofchristatnorthside.com

Visit Us On Facebook!  
Facebook.com/northsidehillsboro

**Bryan Garlock**  
Office: 937.393.3634  
Cell: 478.256.0325  
preacher@churchofchristatnorthside.com

Private

Chronological Bible Reading Plan

Jan 11 Job 29-31  
Jan 12 Job 32-34  
Jan 13 Job 35-37  
Jan 14 Job 38-39  
Jan 15 Job 40-42  
Jan 16 Gen 12-15  
Jan 17 Gen 16-18

We learn from these two passages that elders are also overseers. They oversee the flock. More importantly than that, we also learn they “shepherd” or “tend to” the flock. Hence, we get our term “pastor.” It should be noted that the same Greek word translated “shepherd” is also translated “pastor.” Further, the same word translated “overseer” is also translated “bishop.”

Finally, another term seen within Scripture in relationship to the elder is the word “steward” found in Titus 1.7 where the qualifications of elders are mentioned. Elders then are also God’s stewards, meaning, trustworthy.

From these terms revealed, we can come to the conclusion a pastor is an office to hold and a description of what they are to do, rather than a title for man to wear. What I mean is, an elder is a pastor because he shepherds the flock and an overseer because he exercises oversight.

We also learn that a pastor and a preacher are not the same thing necessarily. It is true that all pastors are preachers, but not all preachers are pastors. What I mean is, a man can be both a preacher and a pastor (see 1 Tim. 5.17) and to be qualified as a pastor he must be able to teach and preach (1 Tim. 3.2; Titus 1.9). Yet, a preacher might not be qualified to be a pastor.

This is the case in my situation. I am a preacher (literally meaning a proclaimer of divine truth), but I am not qualified to be a pastor. In 1 Tim. 3.1-7 and Titus 1.5-9, Paul gives the qualifications for men who can take such an office. Though I do desire the office eventually, I am automatically disqualified because I have no believing children.

We showed where the term pastor is a description of the work and role of an elder. We also noted that some preachers are not even qualified to be pastors. Now that we understand this, is there anything inherently wrong with calling me or other preachers, “Pastor”?

Jesus declared, “[b]ut you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ. The greatest among you shall be your servant” (Matt. 23.8-11).

In context, Jesus is speaking of religious titles given to men. He condemned any and all who would take a religious title. Therefore, when Jesus says call no man on earth your father it doesn’t mean we can’t call our earthly fathers, “fathers” (notice Heb. 12.7). Too, there is a stark contrast in calling your earthly father a father and calling the priest, “father” as the Catholics often do.

There is no Scripture that allows us to call our preachers by religious titles. The religious practice started with men when they redefined the work and role of the eldership and sought to elevate one man over another.

As flattered as I am, you can call me Bryan Garlock, or better yet, call me brother. As Jesus said, “[we] are all brethren...” (Matt. 23.8). BG