

Pastoral Ministry

The Pastoral Ministry department covers these areas: Ethics, Pastoral and Biblical Counselling, Apologetics and practical Aspects of the Public Ministry of God's Word.

Christian ethics, rooted in the Holy Scriptures, are principally drawn from the moral law of God and various applications of the civil law of the Old Testament. Time is given to natural law, and such issues as divorce and remarriage, birth control, euthanasia and abortion, death and dying and the abuse of drugs and alcohol. All these areas are dealt with, using understanding and Christian compassion which are needed by preachers of God's Word.

The Minister's need to understand and deal with the human condition in this world's chaotic and immoral atmosphere is essential, and counselling skills are a necessary part of Christian Ministry. Biblical Counselling (Nouthetic Counselling) is a Bible-centred process; students are trained in the handling of scripture to help with matters of assurance, anger, bereavement, depression, guidance and many needs that arise within a congregation.

Apologetics brings together some aspects of how to defend the faith in the face of competing non-Biblical world views and theories – such as the Creation/Evolution controversy – and responding to the cults.

Practical Ministry issues include basic matters such as the Minister's management of his time for study, evangelism and the visiting of the flock. It also identifies the need for the minister to be aware of his responsibilities towards his family, personal organisation, coping with stress and fatigue, disciplining members, relationships with and training of Church officers and Church members. Some attention is also given to stewardship of finances, both personal and ecclesiastical.

Finally, as an extension of the Systematic Theology lectures on Biblical and Reformed Worship, there are some sessions in this department on public ministry. It covers aspects of preparing and delivering Bible Studies, ministerial prayer and conduct of Prayer Meetings.

Topics taught in the three years

2018

What is a Pastor?

How to Study

Worship:

The Sabbath Day

Worship Overview

Reformed Worship and the

Regulative Principle

Prayer Meetings

Bible Studies

Fellowship Meetings

Psalmody

Music in New Testament

Worship

Hymnody

Ministerial Prayer

Means of Grace:

Preaching

The Sacraments

False Religions and Doctrines:

Post Modernism and New

Calvinism

Roman Catholicism and the

Antichrist

Islam, Sects and Cults

Open Study Weekend:

Encouragement in God

2019

False Religions & Doctrines: New

Liberalism

Ethics: Place of Christian Ethics

Standing for the Truth

Balanced Biblical Ministry

Contending for the Faith

Ethics:

Law of God and Moral Law

Use of Scripture in Ethical

Matters

Ethical Issues: (Death & Dying)

Ethical Issues: (Abortion and

Euthanasia)

Issues: Bereavement and

Funerals

Counselling:

The Biblical Mandate

Biblical and Secular

Practical Aspects

Mental Health and Mental Illness

Role of the Church

Practical Session

Christ-Centred Care

Christ-Centred Communication

Christ-Centred Attitude

Specific Ministries:

Sunday Schools + Child

Protection

Use of Catechisms

2020

Pastoral Visitation

Disciplining Members

Time Management

Leadership

Wisdom in reforming the Church

Comfort in Trials

Fatherhood of God

Pastor's Devotional Life	<i>Ethics:</i>	Weddings
Motivation: Coping with Stress/Fatigue	Alcohol, Drugs and Addiction	Marriage and Divorce
Use of Entertainment; Using Social Media	Homosexuality and Transgender	Additional Meetings such as Ladies' Meetings & Youth Meetings
Family Time	Stewarding Finances - personal	Coping with Criticism
Apologetics	Stewarding Finances – ecclesiastical	Organization and Delegation
Christian Warfare	Church Meetings, Officers and Members	

Content of Some Lectures:

Overview of Worship:

In this introductory lecture, worship was carefully defined and then consideration was given to “The Nature of Pure Worship”, which is born of divine revelation and shows honour and respect for God’s infinite excellence; after which a serious account of “The Standard of Pure Worship” was taken, which is the written Word of God, and, as Calvin wrote, “We may not adopt any device which seems fit to ourselves, but look to the injunctions of Him who alone is entitled to prescribe...God disapproves of all modes of worship not expressly sanctioned by His Word”; and, finally, emphasis was given to “The Importance of Pure Worship”, because only pure worship will prove to be a means of grace, bring God’s presence and blessing to the Church and to the World.

Fellowship Meetings:

In this lecture we looked at what we might call the additional meetings to the main services, such as fellowship meetings and group Bible studies. In such meetings there may be some interaction.

Some historic examples of these kind of meetings at their best would be the house worship meetings held during the revivals of the Free Church of Scotland. A similar history can be found in the Welsh revivals and the establishment of the “Seiat” or what has been called “The Experience Meeting”

Drawing upon these historical examples and applying the principles to the more recent traditions of fellowship meetings we noted the following points:

- It is best if the Pastor leads these meetings. Trusted leaders of the church can also take this role.
- The elements in these meetings are the same as our main services. The Word of God is always central.
- There may be some aspects of the meeting which are more informal to the main services. This does not mean that there is any less reverence in such meetings.
- If the meeting is interactive, an ability to draw out people to contribute is necessary.
- There is a need to understand the people present – whether they will contribute or whether some individuals may have a tendency to dominate the meeting. There is a need to discern the people present and where they stand spiritually.
- In such meetings the contributions may take the discussion in a different direction to that intended. In most cases there is a need to keep on track. Sometimes, it is worth following up on some comment and taking a different course.
- Wisdom and sensitivity are required in correcting a wrong statement, without discouraging the person.
- The advantage of such meetings is to deal with people’s misunderstandings of the Scriptures and to build them up with personal applications.
- The aim of the meeting is always to lift up Christ and to glorify God.

Post Modernism and New Calvinism:

The purpose of these lectures was to develop an understanding of current worldly, philosophy, social and spiritual trends being embraced by many in the professing Church. Biblical guidance was given on how to respond, with meekness and humility: standing for the truth and being aware of the impact these trends have on the hearers of the Gospel.

Contending for the Faith

Through the prism of good King Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron.16:1,4,6. A good king who was at first a good separatist but was a weak king who could not say 'No', 18:1. This state visit led to one compromise after another. We need to keep separate from error and apostasy to keep the Faith.

1. THE NEED FOR SEPARATION

Evangelicals of the past took it seriously. But some movements happened to undermine this faithful stand.

- a] The New Evangelical movement of the 1940s.
- b] The Evangelical Anglican compromise of 1967 onwards.
- c] The Charismatic Movement of the 1960s and onwards.

2. THE BIBLICAL JUSTIFICATION

- a] God forbids mixed partnerships

Phil.4:3. Cf 2 Cor.6:14; Deut.22:10; Amos 3:3.

- b] The example of the returned exiles from Babylon Ezra 4:1-3.

- c] The clarity of the Bible's teaching.

2 Cor.6:17; Eph.5:10,11; Romans 16:17; 1 Tim.6:5; 2 Tim.2:16; 2 Tim.3:5; Titus 3:10; 2 John 10.

However, the Bible also calls us to true fellowship with all who share right convictions concerning separation Acts 2:42; Phil.1:5; 2 John 1.

3. SOME CLOSING LESSONS

- a] Beware of weariness in standing for the Truth.
- b] The danger of not seeing the danger.
- c] Remember total depravity.
- d] Need to discern the long-term danger and damage.
- e] Never forget Who is building His church.

Spurgeon: "One thing is clear to us: we cannot be expected to meet in any union which comprehends those whose teachings on fundamental points is the exact reverse of that which we hold dear. Cost what it may, to separate ourselves from those who separate themselves from the truth of God is not just our liberty but our duty."

The Place of Biblical Ethics:

Christian or Biblical ethics is a branch of Christian Theology that defines virtuous behaviour contrasting it with wrong behaviour from a Christian perspective. Systematic theological study of Christian ethics is called moral theology.

Most of what are called Christian ethics derives from Biblical scripture and Christians have always considered the Bible profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. 2 Timothy 3 v 16-17 "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*" Some terms used in the Study of Ethics were defined - Absolutism; Relativism and Morality.

An Historical survey from Early Christian times, referring to the Church fathers, was made culminating with the rejection of the doctrine of papal infallibility and the Roman Magisterium (the authority assumed by the Roman Catholic Church to give authentic interpretation of scripture) as the absolute religious authority. The Reformers held fast to Sola Scriptura and many endeavoured to construct an ethical system directly from the scriptures. Calvinistic ethics were then described. The reformers believed that Biblical doctrine was the necessary foundation and source of Christian living, and holy living was the necessary implication of sound doctrine.

The law of God is the standard for Christian conduct. It reveals the character of God and His perfect righteousness. Recognising the importance of the conscience, the reformers taught that a person's capacity for moral self-accountability had an internal authority that approves or disapproves of one's actions. However, it is governed by the Word of God. (The Moral Law of God will be covered in another lecture).

Some practical considerations were raised to give context to the later lectures on particular ethical issues, to be addressed later in the course.

The Ethics course at the Seminary will engage with real situations and deal with them Biblically. Our belief in and adherence to Biblical Ethics are an outflowing of our own faith in the Saviour – a confidence in His Holy Word and a desire to please Him in our lives, for the rest of our lives. Biblical ethics and morality are the Christian's aim as he follows the Lord Jesus Christ - the epitome of a human being who adhered to the Ethics of God's word - perfectly. The Lord Jesus Christ said (John 14 v 21) He *"that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."*

Ethical Issues: Death and Dying:

The aims of the session were to consider various definitions of death from medicine and philosophy. Then we looked at the Scriptures definition of death. We saw how death is universal, unnatural and unique. Teaching on death must form part of our ordinary ministries, it is not to be reserved until funerals. Then we sought practically to consider how the Pastor's role with dying and bereaved is so crucial. We highlighted how this was unavoidable, we saw how it could be ministry defining, we saw how ministering to the dying was both the summit but also the depths of pastoral ministry. We saw in our interactions with the dying, that we need to make them a priority, be succinct in our words, be scriptural in our conversations, be men of honesty and integrity with hopeful realism. We saw some likely reactions to death and then we concluded by considering how the care of the dying and bereaved must be holistic.

Bereavement and Funerals

In this lecture we looked at the Pastor's approach to the bereaved and funerals. The lecture tracked the journey from the initial phone call to the conclusion of the service. Practical considerations were dealt with such as: liaising with family, funeral directors and others. The need to be prepared for any request from family was discussed and the Pastor's response to such requests.

The Biblical Mandate for Counselling:

Distinctions were drawn between Pulpit Counselling of the Word of God and personal and usually private Pastoral counsel between a minister and an individual or couple. The words COUNSEL and COUNSELLOR come up often in Scripture and it was shown how they are used in their contexts. A word study of the Hebrew and Greek words for Counsel and counsellor identified the different scripture words relating to Counselling.

The Lord God has called His people to learn of Him through a relationship with His Son. He has called His ministers to preach His word so that people may come to the Son for counsel. All of us need others much of the time to work out our salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2 v 12). The Lord Jesus Christ is the key to all counselling because He is the great Counsellor. We will not be able to engage in any meaningful or helpful counselling unless we have the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ within our souls.

Biblical Counselling is not about "Christianising" worldly humanistic, Freudian therapies in a Pastoral setting. The Bible is the Biblical Counsellors textbook. God has called Ministers, Pastors and other believers to take the Word of God to deal with heart problems through Biblical Counsel.