

## Know Your Pastor

Psalm 78:72 (New American Standard Bible)

*So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart,  
And guided them with his skillful hands.*

### Introduction

This month, I am starting my 12<sup>th</sup> year at MUMC. Twelve years ago, my family came to this congregation and greeted you in the name of the Lord. And you welcomed us with genuine love and care. I pray and hope that our cordial relationship will continue in the future.

This morning's sermon title is: "know your pastor." Although most of you have known me in the past twelve years, I want you to know what's really happening in your pastor's heart daily. I invite you to walk into my life and check out what's standing out in my heart: such as my priorities, my goal and aim, my love, my concerns, and my passion. For that purpose, I welcome you into my pastoral heart. So, please enter my heart. Take time to examine what I am sharing with you about myself, your pastor, and your shepherd.

### Content

Some years ago, pastors and churches alike were encouraged to develop their own vision and/or mission statement to better serve God's people. So, all the congregations I served developed their own *Vision/ Mission* statements. So did MUMC with Pastor Clark.

**Vision/Mission:** Some of you may be familiar with these two words. Let me share with you how I understand those two words.

**Vision** means where you want to go. It is your destination. It is your dream. It is your goal or the outcome in the end. That's vision. For instance, you want to be a concert violinist. That's your vision. Another instance, if I want to go to Korea, that is my destination and that is my goal. That's my vision.

**Mission** is the things that I need to do to achieve my vision. It is what I need to do to get to my destination. For example, to be a concert violinist, you need to practice daily to achieve your goal. Another instance, to get to Korea, I need to fly, therefore, I need to secure an airline ticket and be there on time at the airport to catch the plane. That's mission. So, if you agree with me so far, let me proceed with my vision and mission statement for my role as pastor.

**Vision** (destination): My vision is 'salvation of soul' (1 Peter 1:9, Romans 10:1) that no one under my care will be lost (Matthew 18:14). My vision is to set you free from sin and

death (Luke 4:18) with God's truth. My vision is to make you Christ's disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). My vision is to present you complete and perfect (Matthew 5:48) in Christ (Colossians 1:28) on the day of resurrection. My vision is to realize God's Kingdom in your heart and life. My vision is to prepare you for God and His Kingdom (Luke 1:17) and also for Heaven (2 Corinthians 5:5). My vision is to get you to Heaven.

To achieve my vision, I must preach, teach, and admonish you (Colossians 1:28, 1 Timothy 4:13). That leads me to the mission statement.

**Mission** (how to get there): My mission here as pastor is 4-fold. I need to do the following four things to prepare you to be in Heaven and ready for God's Kingdom work on earth. They are:

**P.R.E.P.** First, I

1. **Proclaim:** the Word of God the truth to set you free from your bondage of sin and death (Galatians 5:1). This is my #1 priority. If my body is broken up into pieces, every single ounce of my being will cry out, "The Word of God! The Bible!" Why? Because, without God's truth in your hearts and minds, you will never be set free from the bondage of sin and the fear of death. As a steward of God's mysteries (1 Corinthians 4:19), I proclaim Christ the crucified and resurrected (Ephesians 3:10). I am here to guide you in truth (John 16:13). I am here to pump the truth into your heart every Sunday and in every opportunity I have. I am here to constantly remind you that the Kingdom of God is near (Luke 10:9). I preach Christ and teach in wisdom (Colossians 1:28). I am here to help you to confess and believe in resurrection for your salvation (Romans 10:9-10). My mission is to help you to know God and to know Christ His Son and believe in Him through my message (John 17:20). I proclaim the Word of God in every opportunity I have here at MUMC. My mission #2 is to

2. **Remember:** you in prayer. I pray for you every day. Here's why I pray for you. Because my prayers and intercessions will bring you to the peak from the valley. I pray to God on your behalf so that you may not fall into temptations (Matthew 26:41). I pray that you may walk in the light of the LORD and that it may be well with you. I pray that Christ is formed in you (Galatians 4:19, 2 Corinthians 3:18). I also pray that everyone under my care will be saved and come to know God, believe in Christ, and walk in the truth (1 Timothy 2:4). I fervently pray that everyone in our congregation will be in Heaven by turning from evil ways (Acts 3:26). If I ever miss one of you in the presence of God on the day of resurrection, I will cry out in my heart. I remember you in my prayers. My #3 mission is to

3. **Engage:** the congregation in missions. In the past few years, I had a pastoral goal for missions. I wanted to introduce one new mission to the church each year. That's how we started Loads of Love, Family Promise, Angel Tree, Voice of the Martyrs, Operation Christmas Child and so forth. Remember that God created you and me and called us to do good works: *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which*

*God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them* (Ephesians 2:10). We are to engage in good works on behalf of the world. I pray that the Lord will equip us with everything good for doing His will in the world (Hebrews 13:21, 2 Corinthians 9:8). I pray that the Lord help us to bear fruit in every good work to glorify His name (Colossians 1:10, John 15:8). I also pray that the Lord will open the opportunities to do good works in the future. By the way, I would like to take this moment to appreciate all of you who brightened the corner where you are with your good works in the name of the Lord. You made a difference and God is pleased with you. Our hats are off to you. Keep up the good work. Engage in good works. My #4 priority in mission is to:

4. **Provide:** vital worship. Now, you may understand worship as an outside appearance focusing on the beauty of the sanctuary, touched with fantastic praise music, uplifting songs, drama, dance, and so forth. Some churches even bring smoke on the stage to enhance the worship experiences. But I would like to go deeper. Jesus said, "*God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth*" (John 4:24). My mission is to make sure such vital and spiritual worship in truth happen in our congregation.

This is what I mean by vital worship: Vital worship is where people come in and encounter the living God through their worship. In vital worship, only God and His name are glorified and honored. Through vital worship, the Lord fills our hearts and minds with joy and assurance that He loves us and that He is with us. In vital worship, sometimes, God touches our hearts through people's handshaking, hugs, and smiles. E.g., Chris's simple greeting to me: *What's up, Pastor Choi?* Although it was a typical greeting, it helped me to realize that God knew what I was going through. Sometimes, we find God's love and joy among children. E.g., Last Sunday, a lady was touched with God's love when she was given a flower by a child. Other times, you are convicted with the Word of God proclaimed. You feel like pastor's sermon was talking about your situation that morning. More other times, vital worship provides the worshipers with an opportunity to offer themselves as a living sacrifice. Remember: behind every vital worship, the Spirit of God is at work so that we may meet our Heavenly Father.

Now, such uplifting and vital worship experience doesn't automatically happen. Such worship doesn't happen without God. Neither will it without your heart opened. Only the Spirit of God can touch us when our hearts are totally given to the Lord during worship. Think about it. Worship is having an audience with God. It is the encounter between sinful man and holy God. It is the encounter between God the Father and His loving children. What do you think your enemy is doing on Sunday morning? Is he taking a long nice nap on Sunday morning while you are at church? No, he is actively at work right here to keep you from having the vital worship experience. For instance, to prevent you from seeing your Father in Heaven, and to keep you away from Sunday morning services, he makes sure that your life is busy. He fills your life with all non-essential stuff so that you get tired at the end of the week. He even pulls the trigger of an argument with your spouse and children on the way to church to upset you.

I am imploring you to pray with me for a vital worship on Sunday morning. As for yourself, prepare your heart and mind throughout the week for worship in prayer. Ask God to grant you a meaningful and uplifting worship experience. Also, treat Sunday morning as the most sacred time of the week. Make an appointment with your Father in Heaven, and faithfully keep it.

As for me, your preacher, I deposit my prayers and dedication throughout the week for Sunday morning worship and preaching. I fill every single corner of our sanctuary with my prayers: I say to the Lord, *"Please fill every space of the sanctuary and our fellowship hall with Your presence, with Your glory and light! And, on Sunday morning, as Your children come together, pour out His blessings on them."* I also pray that the Lord will anoint my preaching with His Spirit so that God's truth may well be sown into your hearts and that you continue walking in God's light and love.

Finally, I want you to know what I am doing on a daily basis.

My daily routine begins with a prayer. I say to the Father, *You have called me to shepherd this congregation, to feed (Luke 12:42), to lead, (Ezekiel 34:14-15) (Isaiah 40:11) and to guide them with skillful hands and with the integrity of heart (Psalm 78:72).*

**In my shepherding, I do the following four things** based on Zechariah 11:16.

1. **Care for the lost.** My heart is with the lost. Call me anytime you need help whenever you feel lost. I will be there for you. I also deeply care for those folks outside faith who do not know the Lord yet. I care for those who remain in darkness and sin. I earnestly pray that they will come back to Jesus the Light. I also pray that the Lord will open the doors to reach out to the lost.

2. **Seek the young.** I pray and endeavor to bring young generations to our congregation. It has been happening to our church. Sunday School is revived and growing. Young families worship with us weekly. Praise be to God!

3. **Heal the injured.** I pray that the Lord will use me as an instrument of healing and comfort. The Lord reminds me that my pastoral authority is not to tear down His flock but to build them up (2 Corinthians 13:10).

4. **Feed the healthy.** This responsibility takes up about 80% of my time and energy. My earnest desire is to feed you with God's truth, unadulterated and sound. When it comes down to salvation, I don't want to mislead anyone of you with water-down truth, or half-

truth. I am also fully aware that God will hold me accountable with what I have done or have not done with His Word.

### **Conclusion**

Please look at today's text one more time: *So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart, And guided them with his skillful hands* (Psalm 78:72). Here, "he" refers to King David who shepherded God's people in two ways: *the integrity of his heart, and skillful hands*. In the same way, I offer myself to you as your shepherd. Please remember me in your prayer that I will be "*a shepherd after God's own heart and feed the flock with knowledge and understanding*" (Jeremiah 3:5, Deuteronomy 4:6) and that I will shepherd you with the integrity of my heart and with skillful hands.

Amen.