

Message Three

Shepherding in Peter's Ministry

Scripture Reading: 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:1-3

- I. Peter referred to Christ as the Shepherd of our souls; the pneumatic Christ oversees our inward condition, caring for the situation of our inner being—1 Pet. 2:25:**
- A. Christ's organic shepherding primarily takes care of our soul—Psa. 23:3:
 - 1. He shepherds us by caring for the welfare of our soul and by exercising His oversight over the condition of our inner being—cf. Heb. 13:17.
 - 2. This kind of shepherding is an inward, intrinsic, organic comforting—2 Cor. 1:3-4.
 - B. Because our soul is very complicated, we need Christ, who is the life-giving Spirit in our spirit, to shepherd us in our soul, to take care of our mind, emotion, and will and of our problems, needs, and wounds—John 14:16-17; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 6:17; 2 Cor. 3:17a; 2 Tim. 4:22a:
 - 1. As our pneumatic Shepherd, Christ takes care of us from within our spirit:
 - a. His shepherding begins from our spirit and spreads to every part of our soul.
 - b. From our spirit Christ reaches all the parts of our soul and takes care of us in a tender, organic, all-inclusive way—Eph. 3:17a; 4:23.
 - 2. This is the inward shepherding of the processed and consummated Triune God united, mingled, and incorporated with His regenerated believers—John 14:20.
 - C. As the Shepherd of our souls, the Lord gives rest to our soul—Matt. 11:28-30:
 - 1. The Lord calls those who are striving to keep the law or struggling to be successful in any work to come to Him for rest—v. 28.
 - 2. This rest refers not only to being set free from the toil and burden under the law or religion or under any work or responsibility but also to perfect peace and full satisfaction.
 - 3. To take the Lord's yoke is to take the will of the Father—12:50.
 - 4. The Lord lived such a life, constrained by and caring for the will of His Father; He was fully satisfied with the Father's will and had rest in His heart—John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38.
 - 5. The rest that we find by taking the Lord's yoke and learning from Him is an inward rest, a rest for our souls—Matt. 11:29-30.
 - D. As the Lord shepherds our soul and restores our soul, we not only experience Christ but also enjoy Him—Phil. 2:2; 3:1a:
 - 1. The experience of Christ is a matter primarily in our spirit, but the enjoyment of Christ is in our soul—1:27; 2:2.
 - 2. If there is a problem with our soul, we may have the experience of Christ without the enjoyment of Christ—4:2.
 - 3. Regarding Christ, our taste is mainly with our soul; this is the reason that in order to have the enjoyment of Christ, we need the Lord to shepherd us in every part of our soul, especially our mind—Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:23; Phil. 3:15 and footnote 3.
 - 4. In order to have the full enjoyment of Christ, we need to be one not only in our spirit but also in our soul—1:27; 2:2.
- II. Peter charged the elders to shepherd the flock of God according to God—1 Pet. 5:1-3:**
- A. To shepherd according to God is to shepherd according to God's nature, desire, way, and glory, not according to our preference, interest, purpose, and disposition.
 - B. To shepherd according to God is to shepherd according to what God is in His attributes—Rom. 9:15-16; 11:22, 33; Eph. 2:7; 1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Cor. 1:12; 1 John 4:7-8.
 - C. To shepherd according to God is to shepherd the flock of God according to God's desire—1 Pet. 5:1-4:

1. We must see that the heart's desire, the good pleasure, of God in His economy is to be the fountain, the source, of living waters to dispense Himself into His chosen people for their satisfaction and enjoyment; the goal of this enjoyment is to produce the church, God's counterpart, as God's increase, God's enlargement, to be God's fullness for His expression—Jer. 2:13; John 3:29-30; Eph. 1:22-23; 3:16-19, 21.
2. We must be brought back to the realization that we need Christ as our enjoyment; we also have to help others to know how to enjoy Christ, and we have to bring the distracted believers back to the simplicity of the genuine appreciation, love, and enjoyment of the precious person of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself as their life and everything—2 Cor. 11:2-3; 1:24; Rev. 2:4, 7. D. To shepherd according to God is to minister God to others—2 Cor. 13:14:
 1. Our work in the Lord's recovery today is to minister to people the processed God—the Triune God embodied in Christ and realized as the consummated Spirit—Eph. 3:16-17a; 2 Cor. 3:8; 4:1, 5; 13:14.
 2. Those who minister the word should supply the saints with God and reality, not mere doctrine—2 Tim. 2:2, 15; 4:2-3, 5.
 3. If we would minister God to one another, we need to speak words of grace, truth, spirit, and life, ministering the processed God who has been wrought into our being—Eph. 3:16-17a; 4:25, 29.
- E. *According to God* in 1 Peter 5:2 means that we live God; only those who live God can shepherd according to God:
 1. God's economy is to work Himself into us so that we may receive Him as our life and life supply in order to live Him—John 11:25; 6:48, 57.
 2. We are participating in the divine life and the divine nature so that we can live God in our humanity—Gal. 2:20.
- F. In order to shepherd according to God, we need to become God in life, nature, expression, and function—John 1:12-13; 3:15; 2 Pet. 1:4:
 1. We need to be filled to the brim with the divine life, enjoying the Triune God as the fountain, the spring, and the river to become a totality of the divine life, even to become the divine life itself—John 4:14; Rom. 8:6, 10-11.
 2. We need to become God in His attributes of love, light, righteousness, and holiness—1 John 4:8; 1:5; 2:29; 1 Pet. 1:15-16.
 3. We need to be the reproduction of Christ, the expression of God, so that in our shepherding we express God, not the self in its disposition and peculiarities—John 1:18; Heb. 1:3; 2:10; Rom. 8:29.
 4. We need to become God in His function of shepherding the flock according to what He is and according to His goal in His economy—Eph. 4:16; Rev. 21:2.
- G. If we would shepherd according to God, we need to become one with God—John 14:20; 1 Cor. 6:17:
 1. The basic principle in the Bible is that in His economy God is making Himself one with man and man one with Him—John 15:4; 1 Cor. 6:17.
 2. God desires that the divine life and the human life be joined together and become one life that has one living—John 6:57; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21a.
 3. When we are one with God, we become God in life and nature and are God in our shepherding of others—1 John 5:11-12; 2 Pet. 1:4; 1 Pet. 5:2.

III. Peter speaks of Christ as the Chief Shepherd, who shepherds His flock through the elders of the churches—1 Pet. 5:4:

- A. Christ is our Chief Shepherd, and He is the Head of all the shepherds—v. 4:
 - 1. He leads the elders to feed, look after, teach, and guide the flock of God according to God's intention and to become patterns of the flock—vv. 2-3.
 - 2. Christ is the Chief Shepherd, and the believers are shepherds; as the Chief Shepherd, He must have a flock of shepherds under Him.
- B. All the elders are subordinate shepherds; Christ as the Head is the Chief Shepherd; actually, when the elders shepherd, it should be Christ shepherding through them—v. 4; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21a:
 - 1. If we shepherd people apart from Christ, this is not in resurrection but in the old creation; when Christ shepherds through us, our labor is in resurrection—Gal. 2:20; 1 Cor. 15:10, 58; 1 Pet. 5:1-4.
 - 2. All the elders need to learn to shepherd the churches not by themselves in the old creation but by Christ as the shepherding Chief in resurrection.
- C. Christ as the Chief Shepherd will reward the faithful elders, who shepherd God's flock faithfully, with the unfading crown of glory for their encouragement—v. 4.