

Message Six

**Shepherding according to God**

Scripture Reading: John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2, 4; Eph. 4:16

- I. In the Lord's recovery today, there is the urgent need for shepherding.**
- II. To shepherd is to take all-inclusive, tender care of the flock—John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28:**
  - A. Shepherding refers to caring for all the needs of the sheep.
  - B. All the sheep need to be well provided for and well tended to.
- III. Christ is the good Shepherd, the great Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd, and the Shepherd of our souls—John 10:9-17; Heb. 13:20-21; 1 Pet. 5:4; 2:25:**
  - A. As the good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus came that we may have life and have it abundantly—John 10:10-11:
    1. He laid down His soul-life, His human life, to accomplish redemption for His sheep that they may share His zoe life, His divine life—vv. 11, 15, 17.
    2. He leads His sheep out of the fold into Himself as the pasture, the feeding place, where they may eat freely of Him and be nourished by Him—v. 9.
    3. The Lord has formed the Jewish and Gentile believers into one flock (the church, the Body of Christ) under His shepherding—v. 16.
  - B. God brought up from the dead “our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, in the blood of an eternal covenant”—Heb. 13:20:
    1. The eternal covenant is to consummate the New Jerusalem by shepherding.
    2. The eternal covenant is the covenant of the new testament to gain a flock, which is the church issuing in the Body of Christ and consummating in the New Jerusalem.
  - C. As the Chief Shepherd, Christ shepherds His flock through the elders of the churches—1 Pet. 5:4:
    1. Without the elders' shepherding, the church cannot be built up.
    2. The elders' shepherding should be Christ's shepherding through them.
  - D. As the Shepherd of our souls, the pneumatic Christ oversees our inward condition, caring for the situation of our inner being—2:25:
    1. He shepherds us by caring for the welfare of our soul and by exercising His oversight over the condition of our inner being.
    2. 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.
- IV. In order to shepherd according to God, we need to become one with God, be constituted with God, live God, express God, represent God, and minister God:**
  - A. Shepherding according to God requires us to be one with God and to be constituted with Him—John 14:20; 1 Cor. 6:17; Eph. 3:17a; Col. 3:10-11.
  - B. Only those who live God can shepherd according to God—Phil. 1:21a.

- C. God's eternal purpose is to work Himself into us as our life so that we may express Him—Gen. 1:26; Eph. 1:11; 3:11; 2 Tim. 1:9.
  - D. As those who shepherd according to God, we need to represent God and function as the acting God—2 Cor. 1:3-4, 12, 15-16; 2:10; 10:11; 11:2.
  - E. To shepherd according to God is to minister God to others:
    1. How much we can minister God to others depends on our being broken by God for the outflow of life—4:10-12, 16; Heb. 4:12.
    2. 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; John 6:63.
- V. Peter charged the elders to shepherd the flock of God according to God—1 Pet. 5:2:**
- A. *According to God* means that we must live God.
  - B. When we are one with God, we become God and we are God in our shepherding of others.
  - C. 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.
  - D. To shepherd according to God is to shepherd according to what God is in His attributes.
  - E. In order to shepherd according to God, we need to become God in life, nature, expression, and function:
    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; Col. 3:4.
    2. We need to become God in His attributes of love, light, righteousness, and holiness.
    3. We need to be the reproduction of Christ, the expression of God, so that in our shepherding we express God, not the self with its disposition and peculiarities.
    4. We need to become God in His function of shepherding the flock of God according to what He is and according to His goal in His economy.
- VI. The shepherding that builds up the Body of Christ is a mutual shepherding—1 Cor. 12:23-26:**
- A. All of us need to be under the organic shepherding of Christ and be one with Him to shepherd others—John 21:15-17.
  - B. All believers, regardless of their growth in life, need shepherding.
  - C. We all have defects and shortcomings and need others to shepherd us.
  - D. We are both sheep and shepherds, shepherding and being shepherded in mutuality.
  - E. Through this mutual shepherding, the Body builds itself up in love—Eph. 4:16.