

SHEPHERDING THE FLOCK OF GOD

Message Four

(Saturday—First Morning Session)

Shepherding the Flock of God into the Faith of the Truth

Scripture Reading: John 18:37; 1 Tim. 2:4; 3:15; Eph. 1:13; 2 Thes. 2:13

I. The Lord's recovery is founded mainly upon four pillars: truth, life, the church, and the gospel—John 17:17; 14:6; 1 John 5:11-12; 1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 1:13; Col. 1:5:

- A. Truth is the issue of light; knowledge without light is doctrine, but knowledge full of light is truth—1 John 1:5-6.
- B. The experience of Christ as life is contained in Him as the truth; if we do not know the truth, we cannot enjoy Christ as our life—Col. 3:4; 1:5.
- C. The Lord's recovery is a recovery of the truth and of life so that He may have the church; the truth brings in life, and once we have life, we become the church—John 18:37; 10:10; 1 Cor. 10:32.
- D. As the pillar which bears the truth and as the base which holds the pillar, the church testifies the truth, the reality, of Christ as the mystery of God and the church as the mystery of Christ—1 Tim. 3:15; Col. 2:2; Eph. 3:4.
- E. The gospel includes all the truths in the Bible—1:13; Col. 1:5:
 1. The truth is the gospel, and the light of the truth is the light of the gospel—Mark 1:1, 14-15; John 8:12, 32.
 2. The unique commission of the church today is to preach the gospel, the content of which is the truth; our preaching of the truth is the preaching of the high gospel—Mark 16:15; 1 Tim. 2:4.

II. The Lord has raised up His recovery upon the truth—John 18:37:

- A. The Lord's recovery is the recovery of the light of the truth; in the recovery the light of the truth is up to date—8:12, 32; 1 John 1:5-6.
- B. Among the churches in the Lord's recovery, the standard of the truth should constantly be raised higher; the standard of the Lord's recovery depends upon the standard of the truth we put out—1 Tim. 2:4; 2 John 1-2, 4; 3 John 3-4, 8.
- C. The greatest need we must meet is to bring the saints in the Lord's recovery into the truth to carry the recovery on—2 Tim. 2:2, 15.
- D. The kind of church we build up depends on the kind of truth we teach—1 Tim. 2:4.
- E. We need to have the truth wrought into us and constituted into our being; to be constituted with the truth is to have the intrinsic element of the divine revelation wrought into us to become our organic constitution—1 John 1:8; 2:4; 2 John 1-2, 4; 3 John 3-4, 8.
- F. The real eldership is to visit the saints and to shepherd them, feed them, and take care of them by speaking to them concerning the truth—1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17.

III. The elders need to shepherd the flock of God by bringing the flock into the faith of the truth—2 Thes. 2:13:

- A. We need a proper understanding of the expression *the faith of the truth*—v. 13:
 - 1. Faith is the reaction, the substantiation, of the unseen scenery (the truth).
 - 2. The scenery (truth) and the seeing (faith) are objective to the camera (us).
 - 3. When the light (the Spirit) brings the scenery to the film (our spirit), both the seeing and the scenery become subjective to us—2 Cor. 4:6.
 - 4. When there is a click within the camera, the light brings the scenery to the film, and this “click” within us, which brings the scenery of the truth into our spirit, is faith; this is the faith of the truth.
- B. To be sanctified in belief, in the faith, of the truth is subjective; God’s salvation in sanctification is carried out not merely in our objective knowledge of the truth but in our subjective apprehension of the truth—John 17:17, 19.
- C. We all are lacking in the vision that comes from the faith of the truth—Acts 26:19:
 - 1. All the problems come from the shortage of a clear and adequate vision—Prov. 29:18a.
 - 2. The Bible may be in our hand, but it may also be veiled to us in the same way as it was veiled to many of the Jews when they read the Old Testament—2 Cor. 3:15.
- D. Regarding this, all the leading ones in the churches bear a great responsibility—Acts 20:28-32:
 - 1. We will be held responsible for the churches at the judgment seat—Heb. 13:7, 17; Rom. 14:10-12.
 - 2. In light of the judgment seat, we need to be in fear and trembling that we would delay the saints or veil them in any way—2 Cor. 5:10.
 - 3. We all need to be delivered from skating on the surface of the divine truth and to cooperate with the Lord by laboring together with Him to dive into the depths of the truth of His marvelous New Testament economy—Eph. 3:9.
 - 4. We need to present the truth to the saints and minister the proper truth, the proper spiritual scenery, into them—Acts 20:20, 27; 26:18.
 - 5. We should follow the Lord Jesus in ministering the riches of the Triune God into others and in teaching the depths of the divine truth—John 18:37.

IV. The elders need to shepherd the saints into the subjective truths in the Holy Scriptures—8:32; 14:6; 16:13-15; 18:37:

- A. The truths in the Holy Scriptures have both the objective aspect and the subjective aspect; the objective doctrines are for the subjective truths, and the subjective truths are for the producing of the church—2 John 1-2, 4; 3 John 3-4, 7-9a.
- B. The Gospel of John is a book on the subjective truths—1:16-17; 4:14, 24; 6:32-57; 7:37-39; 14:20; 15:1-5; 17:21-23; 20:22.
- C. We need to see a vision of the truth of the mystery in the Gospel of John—14:7-20, 23, 26; 15:26; 16:12-15.
- D. The subjective truths are constituted with the Spirit and life as the substance; without the Spirit and life, we do not have any subjective truths—Rom. 8:2; 2 Cor. 3:6.

E. The practical church life is an issue of our experience of the subjective truths; when we experience the subjective truths, the church is spontaneously produced—Rom. 8:10-11; 12:4-5; 16:1, 4-5; 1 Cor. 1:9, 30; 15:45b; 6:17; 1:2; 12:27.