

Message Three

**The Shepherding of Christ
for the Church as the One Flock and the Father's House**

Scripture Reading: John 10:10-11, 15-17; 14:2-3

- I. According to the Gospel of John, the Triune God as life brings forth the church; although the word *church* is not used, many verses allude to the church—2:16-22; 3:26-30; 10:16; 11:52; 12:24; 14:2-3; 15:5; 17:11, 21-23.**
- II. Christ is the good Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep so that, in the divine life, there will be one flock and one Shepherd—10:16:**
 - A. As the good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus came that we might have life and have it abundantly—vv. 10-11.
 - B. The good Shepherd laid down His human life to accomplish redemption for His sheep that they may share His divine life—vv. 11, 15, 17.
 - C. As the good Shepherd, the Lord shepherds us by feeding us with Himself and in Himself as the pasture—v. 9:
 1. The work of shepherding is the work of feeding—Matt. 9:36; 14:14-21.
 2. The pasture signifies Christ as the feeding place of the sheep—John 10:9:
 - a. Today our pasture is the resurrected Christ as the life-giving Spirit—11:25; 1 Cor. 15:45b.
 - b. In our daily Christian life we should have the sense that we are in the pasture enjoying Christ as the rich supply of life.
 - D. As the good Shepherd, the Lord is leading, guiding, and directing us in the divine life—John 10:14, 27-30:
 1. The Lord shepherds us in life from within:
 - a. Inwardly we have Him as our Shepherd, a Shepherd of life and in life—v. 10.
 - b. As our Shepherd, the living Christ not only gives us life—He is our life—v. 10; 11:25; 14:6; Col. 3:4.
 2. Christ shepherds us by being life to us and by living in us; His living within us is actually His shepherding.
 - E. Under the shepherding of Christ as the good Shepherd, “there shall be one flock, one Shepherd”—John 10:16:
 1. The one flock signifies the one church, the one Body of Christ, brought forth by the Lord’s eternal, divine life, which He imparted into His members through His death—vv. 16-18; Eph. 2:14-16; 3:6.
 2. The Lord has formed the Jewish believers and the Gentile believers into one flock—the one church, the Body of Christ—under His shepherding—John 10:10-18; Eph. 2:14-16; 3:6.
 3. The Lord’s sheep have received the divine life, and by the divine life the sheep live together as one flock.
 4. As the good Shepherd, the Lord causes us to flock together—John 10:16; Luke 12:32; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2-3; cf. Isa. 40:11.
 - F. John 21, a chapter on shepherding, is the completion and consummation of the Gospel of John; shepherding is the key to the Gospel of John:

1. If we do not know what shepherding is, the entire Gospel of John will be in vain to us; it is only when we shepherd others that we can know John in an intrinsic way—3:16; 4:10, 14; 10:9-18; 21:15-17.
2. The Gospel of John is a book on Christ coming to be our life by cherishing and nourishing us; to cherish others is to make them happy, pleasant, and comfortable (Matt. 9:10; Luke 7:34), and to nourish others is to feed them with the all-inclusive Christ (Matt. 24:45-47).
3. After His resurrection the Lord incorporated the apostolic ministry with His heavenly ministry to take care of God's flock, the church, which issues in the Body of Christ—John 21:15-17.

III. The Lord Jesus is shepherding us in life for the Father's house—the divine and human incorporation of the processed and consummated Triune God with His redeemed, regenerated, and transformed elect—14:2-3:

- A. We need to see life and building as revealed in the Gospel of John:
 1. Life is for building, and the building is of life—11:25; 14:2.
 2. The Gospel of John reveals that the Triune God is dispensing Himself as life into His believers and that the believers, as the result of this dispensing, become the building of God, His expansion, enlargement, and corporate expression—1:4; 10:10b; 11:25; 14:2-3, 6.
- B. In His resurrection the Lord Jesus rebuilt God's temple in a larger way, making it a corporate one, the mystical Body of Christ—2:19-22:
 1. The body of Jesus, the temple, that was destroyed on the cross was small and weak, but the Body of Christ in resurrection is vast and powerful—1 Cor. 3:16-17; Eph. 1:22-23.
 2. Since the day of His resurrection, the Lord Jesus has been enlarging His Body in resurrection life; He is still working for the building of His Body under the process of resurrection—John 2:19-22.
 3. Christ, who is the resurrection and the life (11:25), changes death into life for the building of the house of God; our living as Christians is a life of changing death into life for the building up of the mystical Body of Christ—2:1-21.
- C. The Father's house is a matter of the Triune God, through incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection, working Himself into the believers in order to be fully mingled with them so that He may build them up as an organism for His dwelling and expression—14:2-3, 23:
 1. The Lord's coming brought God into man, and His going brought man into God; by this coming and going, He builds up the house of God by building God into man and man into God—1:14; 10:10b; 14:2-3.
 2. By the Spirit and through His death and resurrection, the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, is building an organism, the church, which is His Body and the Father's house, produced by the mingling of the Triune God with His chosen and redeemed people—vv. 7-24.
 3. The Father's house is in three stages: the stage of God incarnate, the stage of Christ resurrected with His believers to be built up as the church, and the consummate stage—the New Jerusalem—2:19-21; Rev. 21:2-3, 9-10.