

Message Two

(Friday—Second Morning Session)

**Shepherding the Flock of God**

(1)

**The Pattern of the Apostle Paul in Shepherding**

Scripture Reading: Acts 20:17-36; Phil. 3:17; 1 Thes. 1:5; 2 Thes. 3:9; 1 Tim. 1:16

**I. In the church the most important thing is the person—2 Tim. 2:20-22:**

- A. The importance of the person far exceeds that of the work; what we are is more important than what we do.
- B. We cannot serve God beyond what we are as a person.
- C. The kind of person we are determines the kind of fruit we produce—Matt. 7:17-18.
- D. If our person is wrong, we may build up something by what we do but tear down more by what we are.
- E. If a person's heart is right, the person is right—5:8; 2 Cor. 6:11; 7:3:
  - 1. God pays much attention to man's heart—Isa. 29:13.
  - 2. Whether or not we can become a blessing to others depends on our heart:
    - a. If we are a proper person, wherever we go, we will become a blessing there.
    - b. If a person's heart is not right, even if he were to accomplish monumental works, others will still not receive the blessing.
  - 3. The heart only deals with the question of being for God or not for God:
    - a. The heart must be set on God instead of on the works—Matt. 5:8.
    - b. Many things in the church life can turn our heart away from the Lord.
- F. In serving the Lord, we have to pay attention to the person and not merely to doing the right things.

**II. The best way to shepherd others, to cherish and nourish them, is to give them a proper pattern—Acts 20:28; 1 Thes. 2:1-12; 2 Cor. 1:12—2:14; 11:28-29; 1 Cor. 9:22:**

- A. Many Christians today have no sense of direction, because they do not have a proper pattern—Matt. 9:36; 15:14.
- B. The proper way to take care of the new believers and the young ones is to show them a pattern; by showing them a pattern, we water them, nourish them, and cherish them—Phil. 3:17; 2 Thes. 3:9; 1 Tim. 1:16; 4:12; Titus 2:7; 1 Pet. 5:3.
- C. Paul fed his spiritual children with his living of Christ; this is why he emphasized his manner of life when he was with them—1 Thes. 1:5; 2:1-12.

**III. To the elders of the church in Ephesus, Paul was a pattern; thus, he could remind the elders of how he was with them all the time—Acts 20:18, 35:**

- A. The shepherding of God's flock was on Paul's heart—v. 28:
  - 1. Paul did not consider that he was doing a great work; rather, he considered what he did as shepherding the flock of God.

2. We need to be revolutionized in our logic and consideration and not think that we are going to do a great work for Christ, like certain spiritual giants who actually did not accomplish much for God's interest but instead made a name for themselves, with little result for the building up of the Body of Christ.
- B. Paul was a pattern to the believers of living and ministering Christ as the Spirit in his spirit for the building up of the Body of Christ—1 Tim. 1:16; 4:12; Rom. 8:16:
    1. Paul lived by the Spirit, walked by the Spirit, sowed unto the Spirit, and ministered the Spirit as a spiritual man who lived and served in his spirit—Gal. 5:16, 25; 6:8; 2 Cor. 3:6; 1 Cor. 2:15; 2 Cor. 2:13; Rom. 1:9; 8:16.
    2. Paul lived and did everything in the Body, through the Body, and for the Body—12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 4:1-6, 15-16; Col. 2:19.
  - C. Paul served the Lord as a slave; he regarded himself as a slave of Christ Jesus—Acts 20:19; Rom. 1:1:
    1. Paul's use of the term *a slave of Christ Jesus* indicates that he was not a self-appointed apostle or one hired by the Lord.
    2. Paul was one purchased to serve God and minister to His people, not in the natural life but in the regenerated life—Exo. 21:6; Matt. 20:26; 25:14.
  - D. Paul was a person in spirit; as such a person, he had an open spirit, a frank spirit, a pure spirit, a bold spirit, a humble spirit, a loving spirit, a tender spirit, a spirit that was not self-seeking, and a coordinating spirit—Acts 20:22.
  - E. Paul lived and moved in and with the Divine Trinity, and he ministered the processed Triune God as grace—vv. 21-24, 28, 32, 35.
  - F. Paul declared "all the counsel of God," not withholding anything that was profitable—vv. 20, 26-27.
  - G. Paul testified repentance unto God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—v. 21.
  - H. Paul testified of the gospel of the grace of God and proclaimed the kingdom—vv. 24-25.
    - I. Paul did not consider his soul-life precious to himself but was burdened to finish the course and the ministry he had received—v. 24.
  - J. Paul did not covet but worked with his own hands in order to meet his needs and to give to others, supporting the weak—vv. 33-35:
    1. In order to be a proper pattern, we need to be pure in our motives, especially concerning money.
    2. If we are not pure concerning money, if we are not sincere, honest, and faithful regarding it, we may be among those who adulterate the word of God and peddle it—2 Cor. 2:17.
    3. An impure motive may cause us to use flattery or to have a pretext for covetousness—1 Thes. 2:5.
  - K. Paul taught the believers publicly and from house to house, admonishing each one with tears—Acts 20:19-20, 31.
  - L. Paul committed the saints to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build them up and to give them the inheritance among all those who have been sanctified—v. 32.
  - M. We need to contact people, sinners and believers, and take care of their needs as the apostle Paul did—2 Cor. 1:12—2:14; 11:28-29; 1 Cor. 9:22.