

SHEPHERDING THE CHURCH OF GOD AS A SLAVE OF GOD

(Friday—Second Morning Session)

Message Two

Shepherding the Church of God as a Slave of God, with the Spirit of a Slave, the Love of a Slave, and the Obedience of a Slave

Scripture Reading: Exo. 21:1-6; Eph. 5:25, 2; Rom. 1:1; 2 Cor. 5:14; 12:15

I. The slave in Exodus 21:1-6 is a type of Christ:

- A. The New Testament reveals the threefold love of the Lord Jesus for the Father, the church, and the saints—v. 5; John 14:31; Eph. 5:25, 2; Gal. 2:20.
- B. As the Slave of God, the Lord Jesus was obedient unto death; His death on the cross was an act of obedience—John 14:30-31; Phil. 2:8:
 - 1. Because the Lord Jesus loved God the Father, He kept the Father's word not only as a Son but especially as a slave—John 5:19; 12:48-50; 17:8, 14.
 - 2. The Lord Jesus listened to God and did God's will by keeping His word—4:34; 12:49.
- C. As the One who became a slave, the Lord Jesus taught His disciples, who were striving to be first, to take the position of a slave—Matt. 20:27-28.

II. The apostle Paul followed the Lord Jesus to be a slave; he shepherded the church of God as a slave of God, having the spirit of a slave, the love of a slave, and the obedience of a slave—Rom. 1:1; Titus 1:1; Acts 20:19:

- A. Paul was such a slave by the serving and sacrificing life of Christ—Phil. 2:17.
- B. As a slave of Christ and of God, Paul was willing to empty himself, humble himself, and sacrifice his rank, rights, and privileges—1 Cor. 9:19-23.
- C. Paul had the spirit of a slave—Rom. 1:1, 9:
 - 1. Paul was a person in the spirit—2 Cor. 1:12; 2:13; 4:13, 16; 12:18.
 - 2. In 2 Corinthians we can see the kind of spirit Paul had:
 - a. An open spirit—6:11-13.
 - b. A frank and pure spirit—10:7-12; 11:5-31; 12:11.
 - c. A bold and humble spirit—3:12; 7:4, 16; 10:1; 12:11; 13:2.
 - d. A loving and tender spirit—7:3, 4b; 12:15, 19.
 - e. A spirit that is not self-seeking—7:2; 12:14-17.
 - f. A coordinating spirit—v. 18; 2:10.
 - g. An uplifted, transcendent spirit—5:13a; 12:2-4.
- D. Paul had the love of a slave—5:14; 12:15:
 - 1. Love is the motive and the prerequisite of being a slave:
 - a. Love is the basis for service—Rev. 2:4-5.
 - b. Love requires sacrifice; without sacrifice, there can be no love—Eph. 5:2.
 - 2. Paul is a pattern of a person who loved the church—2 Cor. 12:15; 11:28:
 - a. The church was precious to Paul because he realized that the desire of the Lord's heart is to gain the church—Eph. 1:5, 9; 5:25-27; Matt. 13:44-46.
 - b. Paul knew the value of the church as a precious treasure to God, a treasure which He obtained through His own blood—Acts 20:28.

- c. Second Corinthians reveals that Paul's heart was fully for the church and on the church:
 - (1) Paul was willing to spend and be spent for the church—12:14-15.
 - (2) Paul loved the church no matter how the church treated him—v. 15b.
 - (3) Paul loved all the churches, having a genuine care and anxiety for them all—11:28.
 - (4) Paul ministered life to the church by dying—4:10-12.
- E. Paul had the obedience of a slave—Acts 9:6; 22:10; 26:19; Phil. 2:8, 12; 2 Cor. 2:9; 7:15; 10:6:
 - 1. Love is the prerequisite of obedience, and love produces obedience.
 - 2. If we have the spirit of a slave and the love of a slave, it will be easy for us to obey—5:14; 10:6.

III. If we would take Christ as our pattern and follow Paul's example, we must learn to be slaves and sacrifice everything for others—Gal. 5:13:

- A. A slave does not stand on his own rights; he knows only to serve and to sacrifice, not to care for his own interests—Luke 1:38.
- B. A slave must always be concerned for others; he lives for others, not for himself—Rom. 12:10-11; Phil. 2:3-4.
- C. To be a slave is to have the spirit of sacrifice; a slave is always willing to serve others and sacrifice himself for them—v. 17; 2 Tim. 4:6.
- D. A slave is willing to empty himself, humble himself, lower himself, sacrifice his rights, and serve others—1 Cor. 9:19-23.
- E. To maintain our rank and fight for our rights and interests shows that we do not love others but love only ourselves—Luke 22:27; 1 Cor. 6:1-8; Gal. 5:15, 26.
- F. We need to empty ourselves, humble ourselves, not claim anything for ourselves, and sacrifice ourselves to serve others—vv. 13-14; 6:1-2; 1 Cor. 9:19.
- G. We need to know the slave's position—Exo. 21:6:
 - 1. Our position as slaves of Christ should be at the doorpost.
 - 2. The slave's ear was opened to listen to the master—Isa. 50:4-5.
 - 3. Many Christians are serving God, but they do not stand by the doorpost, and their ear has not been bored through—Exo. 21:6:
 - a. They act on their own, not in accord with what they hear from the Master—Matt. 7:21-23.
 - b. They do many things according to their own concepts, desires, and intentions—Phil. 1:15-17.
- H. In the church life we must all be slaves—v. 1; Col. 1:7; 4:7, 12; 2 Pet. 1:1:
 - 1. Only those who are willing to be slaves can remain permanently in the church life—Rom. 12:11.
 - 2. The elders need to realize that if they are not willing to be slaves, they cannot be proper elders—Acts 20:17-35; 1 Pet. 5:1-3.
 - 3. The Lord Jesus taught us not to be above others but instead to place ourselves lower than others and be their slaves—John 13:1-5, 12-15.
 - 4. In the church life there is no rank; we are all brothers, and we must all serve as slaves—James 1:1; Jude 1; Rev. 1:1; 6:11; 10:7; 11:18; 22:3, 6.