

SHEPHERDING THE CHURCH OF GOD AS A SLAVE OF GOD

(Saturday—Evening Session)

Message Six

Shepherding the Flock of God as a Slave of God, a Priest of the Gospel of God, by Experiencing the Healing Christ and Ministering Him as Life to Others

Scripture Reading: Rom. 15:16; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Matt. 9:12-13; Mark 2:13-17; 10:35-52

I. We must be those who shepherd the flock of God as a slave of God, a priest of the gospel of God—Rom. 15:16; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Acts 20:19-20, 27-31:

- A. A priest is a person ministering God, bringing God to man and man to God; therefore, he must be a person who is one with God, knowing God's heart and speaking God's will, God's way, and God's plan—Rom. 15:16; Acts 20:20, 27.
- B. God created man with particular characteristics, which show His desire in His creation of man to have a priesthood to serve Him; a priest is a person who bears these four particular characteristics:
 1. God created man in His image, that man might bear His likeness, expressing Him—Gen. 1:26; John 17:4; Phil. 1:20; Gal. 6:17; 1 Cor. 6:20; 10:31; Rev. 21:10-11.
 2. He gave man His authority for His dominion, which indicates that man is His representative—Gen. 1:26; Rom. 5:17, 21; 14:17; Rev. 22:3-5.
 3. He created man with a spirit to contact and receive Him—Gen. 2:7; Prov. 20:27; Zech. 12:1; John 4:24; Rom. 1:9.
 4. He put man in front of the tree of life, indicating that He desired that man would receive and eat Him as the tree of life so that man might live God—Gen. 2:9; John 6:57; 10:10b; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Phil. 1:19-21a; Gal. 2:20.
- C. After the fall of man, there is the need of offering the sacrifices to solve the problem of man's sin; a priest offers the sacrifices, which typify Christ, to God for God's satisfaction (Heb. 10:5-10; 1 Pet. 2:5); the spiritual sacrifices that the believers offer in the New Testament according to God's economy are:
 1. Christ as the reality of all the Old Testament types, such as the burnt offering, meal offering, peace offering, sin offering, and trespass offering—Lev. 1—5.
 2. The sinners saved by our gospel preaching, offered as members of Christ—Rom. 15:16; 12:1; Col. 1:28-29.
 3. Our body, our praises, and the things that we do for God—Rom. 12:1; Heb. 13:15-16; Phil. 4:18.
- D. The purpose of our priestly service is to minister life to others (1 John 5:16; 1 Cor. 3:6; 2 Cor. 3:6); in order to minister life to others, we must do four things:
 1. Day by day we need to spend personal time with the Lord, consecrating ourselves anew each day to serve Him as a slave in ministering life to rescue and sustain the weary and weak ones—Exo. 21:5-6; Isa. 50:4-5.
 2. As we spend time with the Lord privately, we must learn in the presence of the Lord to be dealt with under His light—John 8:12; 1 John 1:5, 7, 9.
 3. After we reconsecrate ourselves to the Lord and deal thoroughly with Him, we can be infused with His burden according to His perfect will to care for people by the overflow of life from us to them—John 7:37-39a.

4. We must learn to be interested in the Lord's people, having an intimate concern for them; we need to have a change in our disposition to be fishers of men and feeders of lambs—2 Cor. 7:3; 1 Thes. 2:7, 11; Matt. 4:19; John 21:15; S. S. 1:7-8; Matt. 16:24-26.

II. In order to shepherd the flock of God as a slave of God, a priest of the gospel of God, we must experience the healing Christ and minister Him as life to others to heal, recover, enliven, and save them for the building up of His Body in love—9:12-13; Mal. 4:2; Eph. 4:16; 1 Cor. 13:4-7:

- A. The Lord as the Physician takes care of His "patients" by causing them to feast with Him, bringing them into the enjoyment of God; the joy of salvation, the enjoyment of God, is a feast—Mark 2:13-17; 1 Cor. 5:7-8; Psa. 51:2, 12.
- B. The Slave-Savior comes as a Physician with mercy and grace to heal and recover us as sick people with four kinds of major diseases—103:1-3:
 1. A fever may signify a person's unbridled temper, which is abnormal and intemperate; the Slave-Savior heals our sick condition, becoming our inward rest and quietness, and restores us to normality that we might serve Him—Mark 1:29-31; Isa. 30:15a; cf. Prov. 15:1; 25:15.
 2. Leprosy is the most contaminating and damaging disease, causing its victim to be isolated from God and from men; the cleansing of the leper signifies the recovering of the sinner to the fellowship with God and with men—Mark 1:40-45; Num. 12:1-10; 2 Kings 5:1, 9-14; Mark 14:3; 1 John 1:3.
 3. The paralytic signifies a sinner who is paralyzed by sin, one who is unable to walk and move before God; through the forgiveness of our sins in Christ's judicial redemption, we are able to walk and move by the Spirit in God's organic salvation—Mark 2:1-12; 1 John 1:7, 9; Gal. 5:25.
 4. The flow of blood, the issue of blood, signifies a life that cannot be retained; by touching the Lord, His divine power is transfused into us to become our healing—Mark 5:25-34.
- C. The move of the Slave-Savior's gospel service is concluded with the healing of Bartimaeus, a blind beggar; we all need this final healing—10:35-52:
 1. It is significant that the story of James and John asking the Lord for a position in the kingdom is followed by the story of the healing of Bartimaeus in Jericho; the Lord asked James and John and Bartimaeus the same question—"What do you want Me to do for you?"—vv. 36, 51.
 2. James and John were actually blind beggars, begging for a position at the Lord's right and left; this is why the case of Bartimaeus follows the case of their ambition for position—cf. 1 Tim. 3:6; 6:4; 2 Tim. 3:4.
 3. James and John begged in a wrong way, but Bartimaeus begged in a right way; James and John asked to sit on the Lord's right and left, but Bartimaeus asked to receive his sight—cf. Rev. 3:17-18.
 4. Immediately after James and John made their request to sit on the Lord's right hand and on His left in His glory, they all came to Jericho; ambition for position brings one into Jericho, a city of curse—1 Cor. 16:22; cf. 2:9.
 5. Our portion in the church life is not position but termination; the way into the kingdom is to take the portion of death and walk through the process of death in order to enjoy the Lord as the resurrection—Gal. 2:20; John 11:25.

6. Bartimaeus threw away his garment and came to Jesus; a garment or uniform signifies position; all of us in the church life need to throw away all the garments of position and care only to receive spiritual sight.
7. By dying with Christ, we pass out of our blindness and into the Lord's resurrection to receive our sight and to enjoy Him as our all-inclusive, universal replacement; we all need to receive this final healing.