

SHEPHERDING THE CHURCH OF GOD AS A SLAVE OF GOD

(Lord's Day—Second Morning Session)

Message Eight

Experiencing the Organic Shepherding of the Pneumatic Christ for Shepherding the Church of God as a Slave of God

Scripture Reading: Psa. 23

- I. The indwelling, pneumatic Christ is “my Shepherd,” and under His all-inclusive, tender care “I will lack nothing”—2 Cor. 3:17a; 2 Tim. 4:22; 1 Cor. 6:17; Psa. 23:1.**
- II. Under the organic shepherding of the pneumatic Christ, we can say, “He makes me lie down in green pastures; / He leads me beside waters of rest”—v. 2:**
 - A. *Green* signifies the riches of life; the green pastures are Christ Himself as our nourishment—John 10:9.
 - B. Christ can be our green pasture, our feeding place, through His incarnation, death, and resurrection.
 - C. The waters of rest signify the Spirit, who was consummated in Christ's resurrection—7:39.
 - D. Both the green pastures and the restful waters are the resurrected, pneumatic Christ as the life-giving Spirit—1 Cor. 15:45b; John 14:16-18.
- III. Under the organic shepherding of the pneumatic Christ, we can testify, “He restores my soul; / He guides me on the paths of righteousness / For His name's sake”—Psa. 23:3:**
 - A. For our soul to be restored means that we are revived; restoring also includes renewing and transforming—Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18.
 - B. As the Shepherd of our souls, the pneumatic Christ oversees our inward condition, caring for the situation of our inner being—1 Pet. 2:25:
 1. Christ takes care of us in a tender, all-inclusive way; this kind of shepherding is an inward, intrinsic, organic comforting.
 2. Because our soul is very complicated, we need Christ, who is the life-giving Spirit in our spirit, to shepherd us in our soul, to take care of our mind, emotion, and will and of our problems, needs, and wounds.
 - C. *The paths of righteousness* indicates our walk—Rom. 8:4; Gal. 5:16, 25.
 - D. *For His name's sake* means for the sake of His person, His living person as the pneumatic Christ—Matt. 28:19; 18:20; Col. 3:17.
 - E. Christ restores our soul so that we may take His way and walk on the paths of righteousness—Matt. 5:20; Phil. 3:9; Rev. 19:7-8:
 1. We need to be proper and balanced in our mind, emotion, and will; otherwise, we cannot be righteous.
 2. Under the organic shepherding of the pneumatic Christ, we are balanced, corrected, and adjusted—2 Tim. 1:7.

3. In all that we do, we need to be under Christ's shepherding, taking Christ as both our paths and our righteousness.
- F. The paths of righteousness involve four aspects of righteousness:
1. Righteousness is being right with persons, things, and matters before God according to His righteous and strict requirements—Matt. 5:20.
 2. Righteousness is a matter of God's kingdom; thus, righteousness issues from God for His administration and is related to His government and rule—6:33; Psa. 89:14; 97:2; Isa. 32:1.
 3. Righteousness is the outward expression of the Christ who lives in us as the life-giving Spirit, the expression of the Christ whom we live—Rev. 19:8.
 4. Righteousness is a matter of being right with God in our being, of having an inner being that is transparent and crystal clear and that is in the mind and will of God—2 Cor. 5:21.

IV. Under the organic shepherding of the pneumatic Christ, we can say with assurance, “Even though I walk / Through the valley of the shadow of death, / I do not fear evil, / For You are with me; / Your rod and Your staff, / They comfort me”—Psa. 23:4:

- A. For the pneumatic Christ to be with us means that we enjoy His invisible presence, which is special, personal, and intimate—Matt. 28:20b; 2 Tim. 4:22a.
- B. The presence of the pneumatic Christ is a comfort, a rescue, and a sustaining to us when we are walking through the valley of the shadow of death.
- C. The Lord's rod, a symbol of His authority, is our protection:
 1. We are under the Lord's authority and take the way marked out by Him.
 2. Every negative thing—death, darkness, fear, evil—is under His rule, control, and authority.
- D. The Lord's staff is for guidance, instruction, training, direction, and sustenance.
- E. Under the organic shepherding of the pneumatic Christ in the valley of the shadow of death, we experience God as the God of resurrection and may arrive at the out-resurrection—2 Cor. 1:9; Phil. 3:10-11:
 1. The working of the cross terminates our self that we may experience God in resurrection and trust in the God of resurrection—2 Cor. 1:9.
 2. To arrive at the out-resurrection means that our entire being is gradually and continually resurrected—Phil. 3:10-11.

V. Under the organic shepherding of the pneumatic Christ, we can declare, “You spread a table before me / In the presence of my adversaries; / You anoint my head with oil; / My cup runs over”—Psa. 23:5:

- A. Here we experience Christ on the battlefield, where we are fighting against the enemies—v. 5a.
- B. The Christian life is a life of feasting and fighting; thus, on the battlefield a table, a feast, is spread before us.
- C. The Lord anoints our head with oil, and our cup runs over—v. 5b:
 1. This is the anointing of the compound, life-giving Spirit in Christ's resurrection—Heb. 1:9.
 2. The Bible uses the word *cup* to indicate blessing; the cup of blessing runs over.

D. In Psalm 23:5 we have the Triune God: the Son as the feast, the Spirit as the anointing oil, and the Father as the source of blessing.

VI. Under the organic shepherding of the pneumatic Christ, we can testify, “Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me / All the days of my life, / And I will dwell in the house of Jehovah / For the length of my days”—v. 6:

- A. *Goodness* refers to the grace of Christ, *lovingkindness* refers to the love of the Father, and *follow* refers to the fellowship of the Spirit; this means that through Christ’s organic shepherding, the grace of the Son, the love of the Father, and the fellowship of the Spirit are with us—Heb. 13:20; 2 Cor. 13:14.
- B. Under the Lord’s shepherding, the enjoyment of the processed and consummated Triune God ushers us into the house of Jehovah (the church and the New Jerusalem—1 Tim. 3:15-16; Rev. 21:2-3, 22) “for the length of my days,” that is, in the present age, in the coming age, and in eternity:
1. God’s house is our dwelling place, where we enjoy the Triune God—the Son’s grace, the Father’s love, and the Spirit’s fellowship.
 2. Today we enjoy the Triune God in the church, and in the future we will enjoy the Triune God in the New Jerusalem.
 3. The house of the Lord is the enlarged, universal, divine-human incorporation—the Father’s house for His manifestation, satisfaction, and rest—where we will dwell (in the way of coinherence) for eternity—John 14:2, 20; 15:4a; Rev. 21:3, 22.