

Message Six

Shepherding according to God

Scripture Reading: John 21:15-17; 1 Pet. 5:2; 2:25; Eph. 4:12-16

- I. To shepherd is to take all-inclusive tender care of the flock—John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28:**
 - A. Shepherding refers to caring for all the needs of the sheep.
 - B. All the sheep need to be well provided for and well tended to.
- II. In the Lord's recovery today, there is an urgent need of shepherding—John 21:16; 1 Pet. 5:2:**
 - A. In His organic salvation God the Father first regenerates us by God the Spirit and then shepherds us in God the Son as our Shepherd so that we may exist and grow in His life for eternity—John 3:6; 10:10, 14-16.
 - B. To shepherd the believers is crucial for their growth in the divine life unto maturity for the building up of the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:12-16.
- III. Shepherding depends on teaching; if we cannot teach, we cannot shepherd—Matt. 28:19-20; 9:35-36:**
 - A. Shepherding and teaching go together—Eph. 4:11.
 - B. Our shepherding should always be with teaching, and our teaching should always be with shepherding—Acts 2:42; 20:28; Col. 1:28.
- IV. We all need to know and experience Christ as the Shepherd of our souls—1 Pet. 2:25:**
 - A. As the Shepherd of our souls, Christ oversees our inward condition, caring for the situation of our inner being:
 1. Christ's organic shepherding primarily takes care of our soul—Psa. 23:3.
 2. He shepherds us by caring for the welfare of our soul and by exercising oversight over the condition of our inner being—cf. Heb. 13:17.
 3. This kind of shepherding is an inward, intrinsic, organic comforting—2 Cor. 1:3-4.
 - B. 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 all our problems, needs, and wounds—John 14:16-17; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 6:17:
 1. As our pneumatic Shepherd, Christ takes care of us from within our spirit:
 - a. His shepherding begins from our spirit and spreads to every part of our soul—Eph. 3:17.
 - b. From our spirit Christ reaches all the parts of our soul and takes care of us in a tender, organic, all-inclusive way—1 Thes. 5:23.
 2. This is the inward shepherding of the processed and consummated Triune God united and incorporated with His regenerated believers—2 Cor. 13:14; John 3:6; 14:20; Rom. 8:16.
- V. Those who shepherd the flock of God should shepherd according to God—1 Pet. 5:2; Phil. 1:21a:**

- A. To shepherd according to God is to shepherd according to God's nature, desire, way, and glory, not according to our preference, interest, purpose, and disposition—2 Pet. 1:4; Eph. 1:5, 9; 3:21; John 14:6.
- B. *According to God* in 1 Peter 5:2 means that we live God; only those who live God can shepherd according to God:
 - 1. God's economy is to work Himself into us so that we may receive Him as our life and life supply in order to live Him—John 11:25; 6:48, 57.
 - 2. We are participating in the divine life and the divine nature so that we can live God in our humanity—Gal. 2:20.
- C. In order to shepherd according to God, we need to become God in life, nature, expression, and function but not in the Godhead—Col. 3:4; 2 Pet. 1:4:
 - 1. We need to be filled to the brim with the divine life, enjoying the Triune God as the fountain, the spring, and the river to become the totality of the divine life, even to become the divine life itself—John 4:14; Col. 3:4.
 - 2. We need to become God in His attributes of love, light, righteousness, and holiness—1 John 4:8; 1:5; Rom. 3:21, 25-26; Eph. 1:4; 5:27; 1 Pet. 1:15-16.
 - 3. We need to be the reproduction of Christ, the expression of God, so that in our shepherding we express God, not the self with its disposition and peculiarities—Rom. 8:19, 29; 2 Cor. 3:18; Matt. 16:24.
 - 4. We need to become God in His function of shepherding the flock of God according to what He is and according to the goal of His economy—Eph. 1:10.
- D. If we would shepherd according to God, we need to become one with God—John 14:20; 1 Cor. 6:17:
 - 1. The basic principle of the Bible is that in His economy God is making Himself one with man and man one with Him—John 15:4; 1 Cor. 6:17.
 - 2. God desires that the divine life and the human life be joined together to become one life that has one living—John 6:57; Gal. 2:20.
 - 3. When we are one with God, we become God in life and nature and are God in our shepherding of others—1 John 5:11-12; 2 Pet. 1:4; 1 Pet. 5:2.

VI. In order to shepherd according to God, we need to live a shepherding life—John 21:15-17; 2 Cor. 6:1-13; 7:2-3:

- A. The more we are constituted with Christ, the more we will spontaneously live a shepherding life because the constitution of Christ in our spiritual life has a shepherding aspect—Col. 1:27; 3:10-11, 14; John 21:15-17.
- B. In order to have a shepherding life, we need an enlarged heart, a heart to embrace all of God's people—2 Cor. 6:11-13; 7:2-3; cf. 1 Kings 4:29.
- C. A shepherding life is a life that warms up others by cherishing them in the humanity of Jesus to nourish them in the divinity of Christ with the riches of Christ—Eph. 5:29; Prov. 25:15.
- D. A shepherding life is an all-fitting life, a life that is able to fit all situations, accept any kind of environment, and work under any condition—2 Cor. 6:1-13; 7:2-3.
- E. We need to shepherd the flock of God according to the loving and tender heart of our Father God and according to the seeking and shepherding spirit of our Savior Christ—Luke 15:1-32.

**VII. The shepherding that builds up the Body of Christ is mutual shepherding—
1 Cor. 12:23-26:**

- A. All of us need to be under the organic shepherding of Christ and be one with Him to shepherd one another—John 21:15-17.
- B. We are both sheep and shepherds, shepherding and being shepherded in mutuality.
- C. In mutual shepherding, we shepherd one another in love—1 Cor. 13:1-13.
- D. Through this mutual shepherding, the church as the Body of Christ will build itself up in love—Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23; 2:21-22; 4:16.