

WEEK 11 —OUTLINE

God's Recovery by Life through His Shepherding

Scripture Reading: Ezek. 34:11-16, 23-31; John 10:10, 16; 21:15-17; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:2, 4; Heb. 13:20; Rev. 7:16-17

<< DAY 1 >>

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 (Psa. 23).

B. All the sheep need to be well provided for and well tended to.

II. In Ezekiel 34 the Lord Himself comes as the Shepherd to search for His sheep and seek them out (vv. 11-31; Luke 15:3-7; Matt. 9:36; John 10:11; 21:15-17; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 5:3-4):

A. The Lord brings us out from among the unbelievers to Himself (Ezek. 34:12-13a; cf. Eph. 2:12-13).

B. He brings us to our own land, signifying Christ as the good land of Canaan (Ezek. 34:13b; cf. Col. 1:12).

C. He brings us back to the high mountains, signifying the resurrected and ascended Christ (Ezek. 34:13-14).

D. He brings us back to the streams, signifying the living water of the life-giving Spirit (v. 13; Rev. 22:1; 1 Cor. 12:13; Psa. 36:8).

<< DAY 2 >>

E. He feeds His flock by the streams, signifying His feeding us with His riches (Ezek. 34:13; Rev. 22:1-2a).

F. He brings us back to the good and rich pasture, signifying Christ as our life supply (Ezek. 34:14; Psa. 23:2; John 10:9; cf. 1 Tim. 1:4).

G. He causes us to lie down, giving us inward rest (Ezek. 34:15; S.S. 1:7; Matt. 11:28-30).

H. He binds up the broken one and strengthens the sick one, signifying His binding up and healing the brokenhearted and sick ones (Ezek. 34:16a; Isa. 61:1-2; Luke 4:18-19; Matt. 9:9-13).

I. The Lord exercises righteous judgments among us, clearing away all the unjust things (Ezek. 34:17-22; Col. 3:15).

J. Christ is the real David, the real Shepherd, set up as the one Shepherd to feed us and cause us to be filled and satisfied (Ezek. 34:23):

- 1.He takes care of us, including all our problems and responsibilities and every aspect of our living (Psa. 23).
- 2.The issue of the Lord’s caring for us as our Shepherd is that we obey Him as our King and come under His kingship (Rev. 7:17).

« DAY 3 »

- 3.As we experience the Lord’s shepherding and remain under His kingship, we enjoy His covenant of peace and are no longer subject to spiritual troubles and disturbances (Ezek. 37:25a).
 - 4.Under His shepherding, all the evil beasts, evil persons, are kept away from the Lord’s recovered people (34:25b; cf. Acts 20:28-29; Phil. 3:2-3).
 - 5.He breaks the bars of all our yokes, including the yokes of sin and the world, and delivers us from all kinds of slavery (Ezek. 34:27b).
 - 6.He promises that we will not be prey to the enemy and that we will dwell in peace and safety (vv. 28a, 25b).
- K.He causes us to become a source of blessing to others so that they may be supplied with Him as the showers of blessing and as the planting place of renown (vv. 26-27a, 29; Zech. 10:1; Ezek. 36:35).
- L. Through the experience of His shepherding, we have God’s presence; we are His and He is ours in our fellowship with Him in oneness for the mingling of God and man (34:30-31).

« DAY 4 »

III. Christ is the good Shepherd, the great Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd, and the Shepherd of our souls (John 10:9-17; Heb. 13:20-21; 1 Pet. 5:4; 2:25):

- A.As the good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus came that we might have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10-11):
- 1.He laid down His soul-life, His human life, to accomplish redemption for His sheep that they may share His zoe life, His divine life (vv. 11, 15, 17).
 - 2.He leads His sheep out of the fold into Himself as the pasture, the feeding place, where they may eat freely of Him and be nourished by Him (v. 9).
 - 3.The Lord has formed the Jewish and Gentile believers into one flock (the church, the Body of Christ) under His shepherding (v. 16).
- B.God raised up from the dead “our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, in the blood of an eternal covenant” (Heb. 13:20):
- 1.The eternal covenant is to consummate the New Jerusalem by shepherding.
 - 2.The eternal covenant is the covenant of the new testament to gain a flock,

which is the church issuing in the Body of Christ and consummating in the New Jerusalem.

3.As the great Shepherd, the Lord is making real to us the contents of the new covenant (8:8-13).

C.As the Chief Shepherd, Christ shepherds His flock through the elders of the churches (1 Pet. 5:4):

1.Without the elders' shepherding, the church cannot be built up.

2.The elders' shepherding should be Christ's shepherding through them.

D. As the Shepherd of our souls, the pneumatic Christ oversees our inward condition, caring for the situation of our inner being (2:25):

1.He shepherds us by caring for the welfare of our soul and by exercising His oversight over the condition of our inner being.

« DAY 5 »

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 in order to take care of our mind, emotion, and will and our problems, needs, and wounds.

3.As the Shepherd of our souls, the Lord restores our soul and gives rest to our soul (Psa. 23:3a; Matt. 11:28-30).

IV. John 21, a chapter on shepherding, is the completion and consummation of the Gospel of John; shepherding is the key to the Gospel of John:

A.The Gospel of John is a book on Christ coming to be our life by cherishing and nourishing us; to cherish people is to make them happy, pleasant, and comfortable (Matt. 9:10; Luke 7:34), and to nourish people is to feed them with the all-inclusive Christ (Matt. 24:45-47).

B.After His resurrection, the Lord shepherded Peter and commissioned him to feed His lambs and shepherd His sheep; this is to incorporate the apostolic ministry with Christ's heavenly ministry to take care of God's flock, the church, which issues in the Body of Christ (John 21:15-17):

1.The apostles were commissioned by the ascended Christ to cooperate with Him to carry out God's New Testament economy (1 Tim. 1:4; Eph. 1:10).

2.Regarding shepherding, the apostolic ministry cooperates with Christ's heavenly ministry, doing on earth what He is doing in the heavens.

V. First Peter 5:2 speaks of shepherding the flock of God according to God:

A.According to God means that we live God.

B.When we are one with God, we become God and we are God in our shepherding of others.

« DAY 6 »

C. 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.

D. To shepherd according to God is to shepherd according to what God is in His attributes (1 John 1:5; 4:8, 16).

E. In order to shepherd according to God, we need to become God in life, nature, expression, and function:

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 a 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 3:2; 2 Pet. 1:4).

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 (John 12:24).

4. We need to become God in His function of shepherding the flock of God according to what He is and according to His goal in His economy (Psa. 23:6b; Eph. 4:12, 16; Rev. 21:2, 10-11).

VI. For eternity we will have the experience and enjoyment of Christ as our eternal Shepherd (7:16-17):

A. As our eternal Shepherd, Christ will lead us into Himself as the springs of waters of life so that we may enjoy the eternal dispensing of the Triune God (v. 17a).

B. The waters of life will be supplied, and the water of tears will be wiped away (v. 17b).

C. Under Christ's shepherding in eternity, there will be no tears, no hunger, and no thirst—only enjoyment (vv. 16-17).

« WEEK 11 —DAY 1 »

Morning Nourishment

John 21:16 He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.

Acts 20:28 Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers to shepherd the church of God, which He obtained through His own blood.

When the Lord stayed with His disciples after His resurrection and before His ascension, in one of His appearances, He commissioned Peter to feed His lambs and shepherd His sheep in His absence, while He is in the heavens (John 21:15-17). Shepherding implies feeding, but it includes much more than feeding. To shepherd is to take all-inclusive tender care of the flock. (Crystallization-study of the Gospel of John, p. 131)

Today's Reading

[In John 21] Jesus said to Peter, "Feed My lambs" (v. 15). To feed is to nourish others with the riches of the inner life. This is a mouth-to-mouth feeding. The second time, the Lord said to Peter, "Shepherd My sheep" (v. 16). To shepherd the sheep is to take care of all the needs of the sheep. The third time, the Lord said to him, "Feed My sheep" (v. 17). At the time the Lord said this to Peter, Peter had been following the Lord for over three years. After His resurrection, the Lord charged him especially with this matter of shepherding the sheep. This shows how important it is to shepherd the sheep. Later, when Peter wrote his first Epistle, he entreated the elders to shepherd the flock of God (1 Pet. 5:1-2).

Shepherding refers to caring for all of the needs of the sheep, whether the need is grass, water, or shelter. All the sheep are to be well provided for and well tended to. (A Timely Trumpeting and the Present Need, pp. 52-53)

Ezekiel 34:12-13a says, "As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day when he is among his sheep which are scattered, so I will seek out My sheep; and I will deliver them from all the places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries." Here we see that Ezekiel prophesied that as the Shepherd the Lord would bring His people, His sheep, out of the nations.

This also has been our experience. When we were fallen as sinners or when we became backsliders, we were among the nations living like Gentiles. Although we were living like unbelievers among billions of others on earth, the Lord Jesus sought us out and brought us out of the nations, out of the unbelievers....Formerly you were the same as the unbelievers, but one day the Lord Jesus as the Shepherd sought you and brought you out from among the unbelievers and brought you to Himself.

In verse 13b the Lord went on to say that He would bring His people back to their own land...Before we were saved or after we backslid, we were separated from Christ. But the Lord sought us out and brought us back to Himself and even into Himself as our good land. Today we are in Christ as the good land. The good land today is also in the church life.

The Lord promised to bring His people back not only to their own land but also to the high mountains (vv. 13-14). Since the high mountains signify the resurrected and ascended Christ, this indicates that the Lord Jesus brings us back to the experience of the resurrected and ascended Christ.

The Lord also said that He would bring His people back to the rivers (v. 13). These rivers signify the life-giving Spirit, the living water of the Spirit. From the mountains, the resurrected and ascended Christ, the living water of the Spirit flows. The Spirit of life flows forth from Christ in His resurrection and ascension. After the Lord sought us out and brought us back to Himself, we not only returned to Christ in the transcendent position of His ascension, but we also began to drink of the Spirit as the living water. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 176-177)

Further Reading: Life-study of the Psalms, msg. 11; The Fulfillment of the Tabernacle and the Offerings in the Writings of John, ch. 28

« WEEK 11 —DAY 2 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 34:14-15 I will feed them with good pasture, and their dwelling place will be upon the mountains of the heights of Israel; there they will lie down in a good dwelling place, and on rich pasture they will feed upon the mountains of Israel. I Myself will shepherd My flock, and I will cause them to lie down, declares the Lord Jehovah.

Ezekiel 34:13 says that the Lord would feed His flock by the rivers. We can testify that in the local churches we have the sense that the Lord Jesus is feeding us day by day by the rivers of living water...Something is flowing [in the meetings] as a river, and we are by the side of the river enjoying the riches of Christ. This is not something of man; it is something of our Shepherd, who is feeding us by the rivers. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 177-178)

Today's Reading

Ezekiel 34:14 goes on to say, "I will feed them with good pasture, and their dwelling place will be upon the mountains of the heights of Israel; there they will lie down in a good dwelling place, and on rich pasture they will feed upon the mountains of Israel." Here we see that the Lord would bring His people back not only to the rivers but also to the good and rich pasture. Whereas the rivers signify the life-giving Spirit, the pasture signifies Christ. By the rivers we have the rich Christ as our pasture. The rivers are for our drinking, and the pasture is for our eating. In the meetings of the local churches, we do have the sense that we are by the rivers and in the pasture, that we are drinking and eating. Praise the Lord that we are under the care of our Shepherd, drinking by the rivers and feeding in the pasture!

In verse 15 the Lord, the Shepherd, says, "I Myself will shepherd My flock, and I will cause them to lie down." To lie down means not to work, struggle, and strive. In the Bible to lie down is to rest...Whenever the Lord feeds us, shepherds us, and gives us something to drink, He also gives us rest. In the church meetings we often have the sense that we are lying down to rest. Outwardly we are sitting, but inwardly we are lying down to rest.

Ezekiel 34:16a continues, "I will seek the lost one and bring back the one that was driven away and bind up the broken one and strengthen the sick one." Here to strengthen means to heal. As the Shepherd the Lord will bind up that which was broken and heal that which was sick. How we need the Lord's binding and healing!...Praise the Lord that while we are eating, drinking, and resting, we are under His binding, strengthening, and healing.

Verse 17 says, "And as for you, O My flock, Thus says the Lord Jehovah, I will judge between one sheep and another, between the rams and the male goats"...This indicates that when we have experienced the Lord's recovery by life—that is, when we have been brought back to the mountains, the rivers, and the pasture and have experienced rest and healing—there can be righteous judgments among us...Actually, only the Lord who shepherds us, supplies us, and heals us can make such judgments. Only after He gives us the life supply, binds up our wounds, and heals us can all the unjust things among us be cleared away.

Verse 23 goes on to say, "And I will set up over them one Shepherd, My Servant David, and He will feed them; He will feed them, and He will be their Shepherd." David typifies Christ. Christ is the real David, the real Shepherd, feeding us and causing us to be filled and satisfied...As our Shepherd Christ takes care of us, including all our problems and responsibilities. He takes care of us not only in spiritual things but in all things related to our human needs. This means that, according to Psalm 23, He takes care of us in every aspect of our living.

When the Lord Jesus comes as the Shepherd, He comes also as the King. The issue of the Lord's caring for us as our Shepherd is that we obey Him as our King and come under His kingship. The Lord is our Shepherd to be our King, and He is our King to be our Shepherd. On the one hand He shepherds us; on the other hand, He governs us. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 178-181)

Further Reading: The Vital Groups, ch. 7

« WEEK 11 —DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 34:26 And I will make them and the places around My hill a blessing, and I will cause the showers to come down in their season; there will be showers of blessing.

30 Thus they will know that I, Jehovah their God, am with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are My people, declares the Lord Jehovah.

Certain portions of Ezekiel speak of God's covenant with Israel...Once a matter has been covenanted, it is established and secure and it cannot be changed. Therefore, this covenant of peace [cf. Ezek. 37:26a] is established, secure, and unchanging. As we experience the Lord's shepherding and remain under His kingship, we enjoy His peace and are no longer subject to spiritual troubles and disturbances. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 181-182)

Today's Reading

Ezekiel 34:25a says, "And I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish evil beasts from the land." Here we are told that, under the Lord's shepherding, all the evil beasts will be kept away from the Lord's recovered people. According to Paul's word in Acts 20:29 evil beasts ("fierce wolves") refer to evil persons who disturb God's people. In the proper church life there are no wolves, only lambs. In His recovery the Lord causes the evil beasts to cease.

In Ezekiel 34:27 the Lord promised to break all the yokes, including the yokes of sin and the world. With Him as our Shepherd, we have no yokes and no bondage. Jesus breaks every fetter! In the local churches we have no yokes. Instead, we have full liberty and full release...Verse 27 also indicates that the Lord delivers us from all kinds of slavery. In the church we do not have the sense that we are under slavery. Rather, we have the sense of liberty. The more we enjoy the Lord's shepherding, the more we are liberated from every kind of slavery.

Verse 28a says, "And they will no longer be prey to the nations." Here the Lord promised that those in His recovery would never be a prey to the enemy. This means that they would never be defeated or captured by the enemy. In the church life we share the spoil of the Lord's recovery, of the Lord's victory. Instead of struggling to gain the victory, we are simply enjoying the victory of the Lord.

Eventually the Lord promised that all those in His recovery would dwell in peace and safety. Verse 25b says, "They will dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods"; verse 27b says, "They will be secure in their land"; and verse 28b says, "They will dwell securely, and no one will make them afraid." This indicates that we will dwell securely and restfully in Christ, without any fear. In Christ we have peace.

In verse 26 the Lord promised not only that His people would receive His blessing but also that He would make them a blessing. If there is the peace which is the peace of the covenant, the Lord's blessing will follow. First, we ourselves will enjoy the Lord's blessing, and then He will cause us to become a source of blessing to others so that they may be supplied.

In verse 29 the Lord promised to raise up a planting place of renown, whose fruit would be for the enjoyment of His recovered people. Once again, this planting place is Christ as the rich food supply. Whatever needs we may have and whatever difficulties we may face, He will give us the rich supply.

Verses 30 and 31 conclude, "Thus they will know that I, Jehovah their God, am with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are My people, declares the Lord Jehovah. And you are My flock, the flock of My pasture; you are men, and I am your God, declares the Lord Jehovah." Here the Lord promised that He would be with them, that they would be His people, and that He would be their God. They have God's presence, God is among them, and they are before God. This is the perfect fellowship with God, the fellowship in oneness—the genuine recovery.

We have such a fellowship, such a oneness, for we are one with God, and God is one with us. This is the recovery of the church life—the real mingling of God and man. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 182-185)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 16

« WEEK 11 —DAY 4 »

Morning Nourishment

John 10:11 I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

Heb. 13:20 Now the God of peace, He who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, in the blood of an eternal covenant.

The Gospel of John tells us not only that the Lord is the life (11:25; 14:6) but also that the Lord is the good Shepherd who came that we might have life and have it more abundantly (10:10-11). He Himself is also our pasture for us to eat freely of Him and be nourished by Him (10:9). (The Organic Aspect of God's Salvation, p. 33)

Today's Reading

The pasture in John 10:9 signifies Christ as the feeding place for the sheep. When the pasture is not available (for example, in the wintertime or at night), the sheep must be kept in the fold. When the pasture is ready, there is no further need for the sheep to remain in the fold. To be kept in the fold is transitional and temporary. To be in the pasture enjoying its riches is final and permanent. Before Christ came, the law was a ward, and being under the law was transitional. Now that Christ has come, all God's chosen people must come out of the law and come into Him to enjoy Him as their pasture (Gal. 3:23-25; 4:3-5). This should be final and permanent. (John 10:9, footnote 2)

As a man, the Lord has the psuche life, the human life, and as God, He has the zoe life, the divine life. He laid down His soul, His psuche life, His human life, to accomplish redemption for His sheep (John 10:15, 17-18) that they may share His zoe life, His divine life (v. 10b), the eternal life (v. 28), by which they can be formed into one flock under Himself as the one Shepherd. As the good Shepherd, He feeds His sheep with the divine life in this way and for this purpose. (John 10:11, footnote 1)

[In Hebrews 13:20] the eternal covenant is the covenant of the new testament to gain a flock, which is the church issuing in the Body and consummating the New Jerusalem. The eternal covenant of God is to consummate the New Jerusalem by the shepherding. God raised up our Lord from the dead to be the great Shepherd to consummate the New Jerusalem according to God's eternal covenant. (Crystallization-study of the Gospel of John, p. 132)

Christ is the great Shepherd through whom God, based upon His redeeming blood of the eternal covenant, perfects the sheep of God, the churches, in every good work for the doing of His will, doing in us that which is well pleasing in His sight (Heb. 13:20-21).

Christ is the Chief Shepherd, shepherding His flock through the elders of the churches (1 Pet. 5:4). All the elders are subordinate shepherds. Christ as the Head is the Chief Shepherd....When we shepherd, it should be Christ shepherding through us....All the elders have to learn to shepherd the churches not by themselves in the old creation but by Christ as the shepherding Chief in resurrection. (The Vital Groups, pp. 52-53, 52)

Without the elders' shepherding, the church cannot be built up. All the believers, regardless of their stage of spiritual growth, need shepherding. Even a brief word spoken to a saint after a meeting will comfort, encourage, and strengthen that one. (The Secret of God's Organic Salvation—"the Spirit Himself with Our Spirit," p. 27)

Peter was so impressed with the commission of the Lord [in John 21] that in his first book he told the believers that they were like sheep being led astray, but they had now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer (Christ) of their souls (1 Pet. 2:25). Christ's shepherding of His flock includes His caring for their outward things and also their inner being, their souls. He takes care of the things concerning their souls by overseeing their souls. Christ indwells us to be our life and everything, but He is also overseeing, observing, the condition and situation of our inner being. He shepherds us by caring for the welfare of our inner being and by exercising His oversight over the condition of our soul, our real person. (Crystallization-study of the Gospel of John, p. 132)

Further Reading: Life-study of John, msg. 22; Life-study of 1 Peter, msg. 21

« WEEK 11 —DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

Matt. 11:28-29 Come to Me all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

1 Pet. 5:2 Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly.

Christ's shepherding does not mainly take care of our body or our spirit; it primarily takes care of our soul. However, as the Shepherd and Overseer, Christ takes care of us from within our spirit. He does not shepherd us or oversee us from the heavens. Today our Shepherd and Overseer is in our spirit, indwelling us as the life-giving Spirit. His shepherding and overseeing begin from our spirit and then spread to every part of our soul. This means that from our spirit Christ reaches the parts of our soul—the mind, emotion, and will—and takes care of all our problems, needs, and wounds. How wonderful! (Life-study of 1 Peter, p. 196)

Today's Reading

John 21 is not merely an appendix but also the completion and consummation of the Gospel of John, a book on Christ being God coming to be our life...Eventually, such a book has a conclusion on shepherding. If we do not know what shepherding is, the entire Gospel of John will be in vain to us. It is only when we shepherd others that we can know John in an intrinsic way. Shepherding is the key to the Gospel of John.

Our Christ today is our High Priest....He sympathizes with our weakness because He was tempted in all respects like us. He is cherishing us in His humanity. Meanwhile, He is nourishing us in His divinity with all the positive aspects of His person revealed in the seven epistles to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3....In His humanity He is cherishing us to make us proper so that we may be happy, pleasant, and comfortable. In His divinity He is nourishing us so that we may grow and mature in the divine life to be His overcomers to accomplish His eternal economy. (The Vital Groups, pp. 60, 109)

John 21 reveals the apostolic ministry in cooperation with Christ's heavenly ministry. After Christ ascended to the heavens, He began His heavenly ministry. In doing this He raised up a group of His followers as His apostles who could fully cooperate with Him. These apostles were commissioned by the ascended Christ to cooperate with Him to carry out God's New Testament economy. What He was doing in the heavens, the apostles did on earth to carry out His heavenly ministry.

The Lord's shepherding was firstly in His earthy ministry (Matt. 9:36)...[His] shepherding is secondly in His heavenly ministry (1 Pet. 5:4) to take care of the church of God, issuing in His Body. When He was on the earth, He was shepherding. After His resurrection and ascension to the heavens, He is still shepherding.

This is to incorporate the apostolic ministry with Christ's heavenly ministry to take care of God's flock, which is the church that issues in the Body of Christ. (Crystallization-study of the Gospel of John, pp. 130-131)

In his first Epistle, Peter spoke in 2:25 of Christ being the Shepherd and Overseer of our soul, our inner being and real person. Then in 5:1-2 he told the elders that their obligation is to shepherd God's flock according to God. According to God means that we must live God. We must have God on hand. We have God in our understanding, in our theology, and in our teaching, but we may not live God when we are shepherding people. When we are one with God, we become God. Then we have God and are God in our shepherding of others. To shepherd according to God is to shepherd according to what God is in His attributes. God is love, light, holiness, and righteousness. According to God is at least according to these four attributes of God. We must shepherd the young ones, the weak ones, and the backsliding ones according to these four attributes. Then we will be good shepherds. (The Vital Groups, pp. 60-61)

Further Reading: Life-study of 1 Peter, msg. 32; Crystallization-study of the Gospel of John, msg. 13

« WEEK 11 —DAY 6 »

Morning Nourishment

Rev. 7:16-17 They will not hunger anymore, neither will they thirst anymore, neither will the sun beat upon them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and guide them to springs of waters of life; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

The elders should oversee “willingly, according to God” [1 Pet. 5:2]. To oversee according to God means according to God’s nature, desire, way, and glory, not according to man’s preference, interest, and purpose. The elders should not oversee according to their opinion, concept, or likes or dislikes. Instead, they should oversee according to God’s choice, desire, intention, and preference. The elders must oversee the church altogether according to God’s thought, feeling, will, and choice. They must oversee according to God’s likes and dislikes. (Life-study of 1 Peter, p. 293)

Today’s Reading

In order to shepherd according to God, we need to become God in life, nature, expression, and function (John 1:12-13; 3:15; 2 Pet. 1:4). 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 (John 1:18; Heb. 1:3; 2:10; Rom. 8:29). We need to become God in His function of shepherding the flock according to what He is and according to His goal in His economy (Eph. 4:16; Rev. 21:2). When we are one with God, we become God and are God in our shepherding of others. (Raising Up the Next Generation for the Church Life, pp. 335-336)

We have to pray and look to the Lord very much that He would show us the intrinsic significance of John 1 through 16. The first four chapters unveil the flowing God in His divine processed Trinity. In John 4:14b the Lord said, “The water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into eternal life.” God the Father is the fountain emerging in God the Son as a spring gushing up to be a river, signifying God the Spirit. The Triune God flows into eternal life, and the eternal life has its totality. Our human life also has its totality. A living person is the totality of the human life. The totality of the divine life is the New Jerusalem, which is the destination of the flowing Triune God. (Crystallization-study of the Gospel of John, p. 143)

Christ shepherds all His believers and guides them to springs of waters of life (Rev. 7:17). In eternity future Christ will be our eternal Shepherd guiding us to springs of waters of life. (The Secret of God’s Organic Salvation—“the Spirit Himself with Our Spirit,” p. 26)

In eternity Christ will not only be the Lamb, the Husband, the temple, the lamp, the spring of the water of life, the tree of life, and the Son of Man—He will also be the Shepherd. In eternity we shall not have problems, but we shall still need Christ’s shepherding. A good shepherd not only solves the problems of the sheep but also feeds them. In fact, the most important task of a shepherd is the feeding of the sheep. Likewise, in the New Jerusalem our Shepherd, Christ, will feed us.

As our Shepherd Christ will lead us to the springs of the waters of life [Rev. 7:17]. This indicates that He will shepherd us into Himself. He will lead us into Himself as the spring of the water of life so that we may enjoy the eternal dispensing of the Triune God, that we may express Him to the fullest extent for eternity. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 364)

Under the shepherding of Christ, “I will lack nothing” (Psa. 23:1)....In eternity, we shall drink of many springs and enjoy many different waters. How good this is!

Tears are a sign of dissatisfaction. Waters of life are for satisfaction. Because the Lamb will supply them with waters of life for their satisfaction, they will have no tears of dissatisfaction [Rev. 7:17]. The waters of life shall be supplied, and the water of tears shall be wiped away. There will be no tears, hunger, or thirst—just enjoyment. (Life-study of Revelation, p. 261)

Further Reading: The Fulfillment of the Tabernacle and the Offerings in the Writings of John, pp. 558-560; The Vital Groups, ch. 8

Hymns, #1221

Jesus, our wonderful Shepherd

The Church — As God's Flock

1221

1. Je - sus, our won - der - ful Sheph - erd Brought us right out of the fold
In - to His pas - ture so plen - teous, In - to His rich - es un - told.
Chorus
(C) Glo - - ri - ous church life, Feast - ing from such a rich store!
Here where we're dwell - ing in one - ness God commands life ev - er - more.

2. In the divisions He sought us,
Weary and famished for food;
Into the good land He brought us,
Oh, to our spirit how good!
3. Jesus Himself is our pasture,
He is the food that we eat;
We as His sheep are fed richly
Each time, whenever we meet.
4. Dwell we here on a high mountain,
Wet with the morning-fresh dew,
Slaking our thirst at the fountain,
Water so living and new.
5. Christ is our rest and enjoyment,
Here we have nothing to fear;
Here all the sheep dwell securely,
Kept by His presence so dear.