

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's Day Prophesying

Message 11: God's Recovery by Life through His Shepherding

I. Overview :

To shepherd is to take all-inclusive, tender care of the flock, referring to caring for all the needs of the sheep. The Lord brings us to Christ Himself, and back to the high mountains, the streams, the good and rich pasture. He causes us to lie down, binding up the broken one. The Lord is the real David to feed us and cause us to be filled. Christ is the good Shepherd, the great Shepherd, the chief Shepherd, and the Shepherd of our souls. Shepherding is the completion and consummation of the Gospel of John. First Peter 5:2 speaks that to shepherd according to God is to shepherd according to God's nature, desire, not according to our preference, interest, purpose, and disposition. For eternity we will have the experience and enjoyment of Christ as our eternal Shepherd.

II. Truth and Enlightenment :

Day 1 --

A. How did the Lord commission Peter to feed and shepherd His sheep?

The Lord commissioned Peter, after His resurrection and before His ascension, to feed His lambs and shepherd His sheep. Shepherding implies feeding, but it includes much more than feeds. To shepherd is to take all-inclusive tender care of the flock. To feed is to nourish others with the riches of the inner life.

B. What is the significance of the Lord promising to bring His people back to the high mountains and the rivers?

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. 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.

Day 2 --

A. Explain 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.

B. Expound Lord says, " I Myself will shepherd My flock, causing 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.

Day 3 --

A. What is the significance of God's covenant with Israel in the book of Ezekiel?

Once a matter has been covenanted, it is established and secure and it cannot be changed. Therefore, this covenant of peace 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.

B. Expound that in Ezek. 34:27 the Lord promised to break all the yokes.

The yokes include 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. The Lord delivers us from all kinds of slavery; we are liberated from every kind of slavery.

Day 4 --

A. How does He lead us out of the fold into the pasture?

The Gospel of John reveals that He is our pasture for us to eat freely of Him and be nourished by Him. The pasture signifies Christ as the feeding place for the sheep. When the pasture is not available, in the wintertime or at night, the sheep must be kept 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.

B. How does Christ become our Shepherd and Overseer of our souls?

Christ's shepherding of His flock includes His caring for their outward things and their inner being, their souls. By overseeing our souls, Christ is also 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 souls, our real person.

Day 5 --

A. How does Christ shepherd us today?

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 and takes care of all our problems, needs, and wounds.

B. How does John 21 reveal 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. The Lord's shepherding was firstly in His earthly ministry and secondly in His heavenly ministry to take care of the church of God, issuing in His Body.

Day 6 --

A. What is the significance of the elders shepherding according to God?

To shepherd 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.

B. Why do we say that in eternity we shall still need Christ's shepherding?

In eternity we shall not have problems, but we shall still need Christ's shepherding. As our Shepherd Christ will lead us to the springs of the waters of life. Because the Lamb will

supply us with waters of life, the water of tears shall be wiped away. There will be no tears, hunger, or thirst, but enjoyment.

III. Conclusion :

The four sections of the book of Ezekiel is vision, judgment, recovery, and building. God's recovery of His people is by life. The Lord established watchmen first, then He Himself came as the Shepherd. At that time, the sheep were scattered; the lost one was not yet sought out, the driven one was not yet brought back, the broken one was not yet bound up, the sick one was not yet strengthened. The Lord Himself as the Shepherd, like the real David, is the good Shepherd, the great Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd, and the Shepherd of our souls. John 21 reveals that Christ's heavenly ministry needs apostles' cooperation in shepherding. Whenever we are commissioned to shepherd His sheep, we must shepherd according to God, not according to our preference, interest, disposition.