

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's day Prophesying

Message Four: Shepherding the Flock of God according to God by Being Patterns of the Flock

I. Overview:

The good pleasure of God in His economy is to be the fountain of living waters to dispense Himself into His chosen people for their satisfaction and enjoyment. Instead of drinking Him, Israelites forsook God as the fountain of living waters to hew out cisterns to replace God as their idols. We must be brought back to take Christ as our enjoyment; we also have to help others to know how to enjoy Christ. Paul, as a pattern to all the believers, lived Christ for His magnification and as a vessel of Christ contained Him to be filled with Him. Paul was a man of prayer, who depended on the Body and for the Body. Paul lived in his mingled spirit and exercised himself to always have a good and pure conscience. He served the Lord as a slave with all humility and tears and trials. Paul's ministry journey shows in a particular way his life of living Christ and magnifying Christ.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Explain in I Peter 2:25 what the shepherding according to God implies?

According to God means that we must live God. 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.

B. Expound how God is faithful and what your experiences are.

Allowing us to have troubles, God is faithful in His purpose to turn us from idols and bring us back to Himself. Our peace, safety, health, and possessions may become idols to us, and God is faithful to take these things away so that we may drink of Him as the fountain of living waters. This is God's faithfulness.

Day 2 —

A. Explain the Spiritual implication of simplicity in 2 Corinthians 11:3.

In 2 Corinthians 11:3 simplicity refers to the believers' single-hearted loyalty, single-minded faithfulness, toward Christ. In the garden of Eden, Eve, was deceived by the serpent, Satan, and was carried away to the tree of knowledge from the tree of life. The church in Corinth, the pure virgin betrothed to Christ, should love, and appreciate of the precious person of the Lord as their life and their everything.

B. Why should enjoying Christ be the primary matter in the church life?

The content of the church life depends on the enjoyment of Christ. The more we enjoy Him, the richer the content will be. But to enjoy Christ requires us to love Him with the first love. If we leave our first love toward the Lord, we will miss the enjoyment of Christ and lose the testimony of Jesus; consequently, the lampstand will be removed from us.

Day 3 —

A. How does Paul become a real pattern for all elders?

First, Paul said that he was serving the Lord as a slave. The elders all have to serve the Lord as a slave. They are not put into a position of dignity or rank. In the church there is no rank and no position. There is only humility and slavery. Following humility there are tears, not joy and happiness. Then third are the trials that come upon us from other people who claim to be for God and even conspire to undermine the work.

B. Expound the meaning of Paul doing things with all humility in Acts 20:19.

We should brand ourselves with the word humility. We have no right to be proud of anything. Everything that is glorious should go to our Master. He is the only One who is qualified to be proud of anything. We are destined to be humble. To be humble is not an easy thing; to be proud is easy. To be humble and even to be humbled are not a happy thing but a thing of tears.

Day 4 —

A. Why must all the elders learn and teach God's New Testament economy?

By knowing God's eternal economy, most of the saints would then be solidly grounded and deeply rooted. Most Christians today receive only shallow teachings, instructing them to be good, humble, loving, and kind. The things of God's New Testament economy, God's eternal plan, and God's plan for the church are absolutely lacking among them.

B. How does Paul teach with Acts 20:20 and 31?

In Acts 20 Paul says, "Therefore watch, remembering that for three years, night and day, I did not cease admonishing each one with tears." Paul not only went to their house, but he also admonished each one of them with tears day and night. The elders among us must pick up a burden to do this day and night. They should go to the homes of the saints and admonish each one with tears, which is better than preaching messages.

Day 5 —

A. What does it reveal to us in Ephesians 3:2 and 4:12?

Ephesians 3:2 speaks of the stewardship of the grace of God, and 4:12, of the building up of the Body of Christ. The stewardship of the grace of God is not limited to Paul and the other apostles. Paul's intention here is to impress the saints with the fact that they all have received the stewardship of the grace of God for the building up of the Body of Christ; the building up of the Body is the responsibility of all the saints.

B. How should we cooperate for the building up of the Body?

The Body is not built up directly by the apostles and the other leading ones, but directly by the saints.

Therefore, all the saints need to be perfected by the apostles and the other leading ones. Paul expected every saint to be the same as he was. We all can be perfected doing what the four kinds of gifted people have done for functioning according to their measure in the Body unto love.

Day 6 —

A. Expound that Paul aspired to be found in Christ not in the law.

At his conversion Paul was transferred from the law and his former religion into Christ and became "a man in Christ". Now he expected to be found in Christ by all who observed him. This indicates that he aspired to have his whole being immersed in and saturated with Christ. Only when we are found in Christ will Christ be expressed and magnified.

B. How did Paul live Christ and magnify Christ on the sea in the storm?

On the sea in the storm, the Lord had made the apostle Paul not only the owner of his fellow voyagers but also their life-guarantor and comforter. Now, on the land in peace, the Lord made him furthermore not only a magical attraction in the eyes of the superstitious people but also a healer and a joy to them. This was Jesus living again on the earth in His divinely enriched humanity!

III. Conclusion:

In 1 Peter 5:2, Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God.... Here according to God, that is according to God's nature, desire, way, and glory, not according to man's preference, interest, and purpose. Peter in his later ministry still exhorted the elders in the church to shepherd the flock of God. To shepherd the flock of God requires suffering for the Body of Christ as Christ suffered. This will be rewarded with the unfading crown of glory. He never forgot the Lord's pattern of loving care and kind cherishing toward him to restore his commission of shepherding. We also are today's Peter; we need to be a pattern of shepherding saints after being shepherded by the Lord.