

## **Guidelines for the exercise of the Lord's day Prophesying Message Eleven : Shepherds according to God's Heart**

### **I. Overview:**

The shepherds of God's people as the rulers transgressed against Jehovah; they did not seek Jehovah that their flock was scattered. Jehovah promised that He would gather the remnant of His flock and bring them back to their pasture and that He would raise up shepherds over them who would shepherd them, and they would be fruitful and multiply. Christ is the good Shepherd, the great Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd, and the Shepherd of our souls; in eternity future Christ will be our eternal Shepherd. What He was doing in the heavens needs the apostolic ministry to cooperate with Christ's heavenly ministry. Those who shepherd the flock of God should shepherd according to God. In order to shepherd according to God, we need to become God in life, nature, expression, and function to be God in our shepherding of others. The shepherding that builds up the Body of Christ is a mutual shepherding. We are both sheep and shepherds, shepherding and being shepherded in mutuality and the Body builds itself up in love.

### **II. Truth and Enlightenment:**

Day 1 —

A. How does Christ, the mighty One, come to be our Shepherd?

As the mighty One, Christ comes to be a Shepherd. In a shepherd's care for his flock, he rules over the sheep to correct them. His regulating shepherds us to bring us into the flock, to get us on the right way, and to adjust us to the proper pace. He is adjusting us not to go too fast or too slow but to take the pace of the flock. Today He is still shepherding us by adjusting us. He directs us, stops us, and urges us on.

B. How does the Lord shepherd us in Luke 15?

In Luke 15 we have both the shepherd, signifying Christ as the Shepherd, seeking the lost sheep and the woman, signifying the Spirit, lighting the lamp and searching within the house for the lost coin. The prodigal son then was drawn home by the searching of the Spirit. How is it possible for us to be here in the church life? This is not of us but absolutely of Him. We are here because as the Shepherd He sought and searched for us.

Day 2 —

A. Expound the word in Ezekiel 34:13, "The Lord would bring them back to Good land."

They were in captivity in heathen countries, but the Lord promised to bring them back to their own country, to the good land of Canaan. Our good land is Christ. 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; we were also brought to the church life, where we have the riches and the enjoyment of the good land.

B. Explain that the Lord would bring His people back to the streams in Ezekiel 34:13.

The Lord also said that He would bring His people back to the streams. These streams or 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; we not only returned to Christ in the transcendent position of His ascension, but also drank of the Spirit as the living water.

Day 3 —

A. Explain John 10:10-11, regarding the meaning of the word "life".

In John 10:10-11 two different Greek words are used for life. In verse 10 the Greek word is *zoe*, which is the word for the eternal divine life. In verse 11 the Greek word is *psuche*, which means the human life. These two verses indicate that the Lord Jesus has two kinds of lives. He laid down His soul life to accomplish redemption for His sheep that they might share His *zoe* life, His divine life, the eternal life.

B. Why do we say the Shepherd, the divine life, and the human life being all for the flock?

The one flock signifies the one church, the one Body of Christ, brought forth by life, which the Lord imparted into His members through His death. Before, the fold was Judaism; now, the flock is the church. The flock is the church which includes two peoples, the believing Jews and Gentiles. The Lord brings both together into one flock and under one Shepherd.

Day 4 —

A. How is Christ our soul's Shepherd and Overseer in the resurrection life?

Christ was our Redeemer in His death on the tree. Now He is our soul's Shepherd and Overseer in the resurrection life within us to shepherd us by caring for the welfare of our inner being and by exercising His oversight over the condition of our real person. Therefore, He is able to guide us that we may follow His model in His steps of suffering.

B. How come our problem to be that we were like sheep being led astray?

Our real problem is in our soul. Our mind, emotion, and will all have problems. Unbelievers are wanderers in the soul, and they do not have a shepherd to take care of them. But we have a Shepherd who takes care of our soul. Not only do we have the Lord's life within us, but we also have Him as our Shepherd. He is now shepherding us in our soul.

Day 5 —

A. Explain the shepherding of the small groups and the vital groups in the church life.

If we do not know how to shepherd, we will not be able to feed others. The main purpose of the small groups and the vital groups in the church life is not merely to take care of one another but to shepherd one another. You shepherd me, and I shepherd you. This is mutual shepherding. In shepherding others, we should first cherish them in order to make them happy, and then we should feed them.

B. Expound John 21, 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.

Day 6 —

A. What revelation does the word in Luke 7:34 bring us in shepherding?

If we see one who is a drunkard drinking beer, we certainly would stay away from him. We would rather go to one who is a saint living properly in corporate living. This is the spirit that fills all the churches. We do not have such a loving spirit that loves the world, the worst people. We classify people, choosing who are the good ones. Do not classify people. Who can tell what they will be?

B. Expound what God-man concept is.

Christ came to save sinners, especially the top sinners. He saves the leader of the "gangsters," Saul of Tarsus. Paul said that while he was rebelling, Christ knocked him down, called him, and saved him. Jesus Himself said, "Those who are strong have no need of a physician, but those who are ill. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners." That is why He was there among the sinners and tax collectors, eating and feasting with them.

### III. Conclusion:

If we are in the light of God, we will see that each one of us has many defects and shortcomings. We must humble ourselves and receive God's grace. This will strengthen our spirit to visit people and take care of people. No matter what they are, we must visit them and continue to go to them and shepherd them. This will give the Lord the way to use you as a means to restore and recover them. We are not qualified to condemn anyone. Without the Lord's mercy, we would be like them. Therefore, we must love them. Not using your or my natural love, but with divine love, for love covers a multitude of sins. We love because God first loved us.