

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

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Session One “The Call of a Shepherd”

Not only are we called to be watchmen but one of the greatest pictures we have in the Scriptures that defines what we do as Pastors is a shepherd.

When I think of a shepherd, I imagine a man who leads the sheep, he walks among the sheep, he knows them and they know him.

- Their relationship is very close and personal.

Jesus uses this same picture as he describes himself and his disciples as found in John 10.

- The rest of this conference will be walking through these key verses to gain a deeper understanding of this model.

This morning we will be looking at the first three verses.

Verses 1-3

The first point I want to make to you today is that the true shepherd enters by the door.

- In case you didn't know who the door is, verse 7 tells us.

And what I believe Jesus wants us to know first and foremost here this morning is that in order to be a true shepherd of God's flock you must be called and enter through his son Jesus.

Notice how the others enter, they jump over the fence. They are thieves and robbers and verse 10 tells us what their intentions are.

With this in mind let us look at another passage of scripture found in 1 Peter 5: 1-4.

This portion of scripture has a title over it saying, “Shepherd the Flock of God”.

Here the Apostle Peter is writing to the Elders who are the leaders of the church. They are called to tend the flock.

Peter writes that he too is a fellow elder and that he witnessed the sufferings of Christ and saw His glory. He would be one of the best sources of information because he was there and saw it all happen.

What does he say in verse 2? Shepherd the flock of God!

- We are going to spend some time this week on what that looks like but here he gives us some insight.

What do shepherds do? We feed the sheep by teaching them God's Word. That is one of the qualifications found in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, Pastors must be able to teach.

- We also protect the flock (Acts 20:28-30). This flock is not ours but God's and he is entrusting us with its care.
- We exercise oversight. God called us to be leaders of our people and oversee their lives. Sheep need leadership because they will wander and endanger themselves very easily.

Peter tells us how we are to lead as well. Not under compulsion but willingly. If you are being forced to pastor then this is not for you.

We are to willingly lead our people, "as God would have us." This means doing it His way and not ours.

Notice Peter tells us there are three reasons not to be a shepherd and three reasons to be a shepherd.

- Or another way to say it would be, three ways you know you are called and three ways we know you are not.

The first evidence of this calling is that you have a desire within you to do it.

- You can't be forced or pushed in to the ministry or it will not last and you will do more harm than good.

God must move inside of you to want it because there will be days when you feel like giving up!

- If any pastor is telling the truth they will admit that there are times when your flesh wants to quit. It is the Spirit inside of us confirmed by the calling that pushes us along through the rough spots of ministry.
- Hopefully there are more good days than bad. Hopefully there are more times that you have a true joy knowing that you are exactly where God would have you and you would not trade that for the world.

Shepherds must serve willingly and not under compulsion. Compulsion means that there is something outside of you pushing or forcing you to do it. With this type of attitude, there will be no care given to the sheep and an attitude of laziness and indifference will set in.

Second, we are not to do this for shameful or dishonest gain ... but eagerly. False teachers are always motivated by money and how they can get more. They use their power and position to rob the people of the church. 2 Peter 2 speaks more to this idea of what false teachers are like.

Shameful and dishonest gain means that they are manipulating the hearts of their people by twisting the teachings of God to try and force their people to give more money. But this is not only dealing with the church.

- If a Pastor works outside of the church they must not be dishonest and crooked in their business life as well.

Pastors cannot seek more than they deserve because you are called to shepherd from the heart ... eagerly.

- You preach God's word because it's your passion to do so.
- You teach god's word because of a burning desire in your heart to do it.

Eagerly also speaks to our attitude. It is the opposite of compulsion. Eagerly brings with it a sense of joy in doing what you do. You are happy to serve God and you are fervent in your duties as a shepherd.

It also speaks to our circumstance. We are eager whether we are rich or poor, whether there are 1,000 people in our church or 10, when you are called it will not matter.

Third, we are not to be domineering or lording it over our people but we are to be examples.

This means that I cannot be some power hungry ruler, a tyrant or a dictator. We don't lead by intimidating our people. Jesus taught against this in Matthew 20: 25-28. We serve by our example that we set for our people to follow.

- Also remember what Jesus said back in our base text of John 10 towards the end of verse 3 ... we lead and they follow!

Instead of demanding that they follow you and obey you, teach them how to obey by your example of obedience to Christ.

- Teach them how to be humble by humbling yourself.
- Teach them how to submit by submitting yourself.
- You can't lead with an iron fist ... but with a loving heart.

Finally notice who we are truly serving as an under-shepherd. We serve the Chief Shepherd who is Jesus Christ and He is returning someday.

When He appears to take us to heaven, those who have served Him well receive this crown of glory, others will have a lot of explaining to do!

This, therefore, is the calling of a shepherd, and a true shepherd is one who is called of God through the door of his son, Jesus Christ.

Session Two – “The Shepherd’s Voice”

Yesterday we looked at John 10 verses 1-3 pointing out that the shepherd must be one that is called through the door of Jesus Christ.

- We also examined another passage found in 1 Peter 5 which gave us further instructions on shepherding the flock of God.

This morning I would like to continue in our study of John 10 and look at verses 4-5.

Notice another necessity of the shepherd. Not only do they enter by the door, having a true calling, but they also lead with their voice.

- It is not only how they speak, but what they are speaking.

We can fill our people with useless knowledge, or we can fill them with God’s word. Useless knowledge will not last and will not help their soul. God’s word has power and will never fade away or fail them.

I want to fill my people with as much of God’s word as I can so that when they go out into the world they have something solid to stand on.

Notice the sheep, they take comfort in the shepherd’s voice and they follow him. The stranger has the wrong voice and the wrong word and the sheep flee from him. Why do they flee? Because what the stranger is saying does not match the shepherd’s words.

We as pastors preach the truth so that our people can discern a lie when they hear it. There are a lot of people teaching lies out there. There are a lot of religions and cults teaching lies that we want our sheep to flee from when they hear it.

When my people hear from a Mormon or a Jehovah’s Witness, I want them to know the truth so well that they can stand against the lies. This is why I constantly preach God’s word, and this is why they follow.

Now, to confirm this word to you, let’s look to the Apostle Paul and what he wrote to us in 2 Corinthians 2: 14-17

Remember our points so far. First it starts with a calling through the door of Jesus Christ. Second, it continues with our voice, speaking God’s word.

Vs. 14

Notice our triumph is in Christ's leading us. He must be the one to lead you in your ministry. He is the one who leads us in victory and we always thank Him for it.

Also see that we are His air fresheners! Through us God spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of Him everywhere we go.

- Some pastors complain about where they have to minister and the conditions surrounding them. But we must understand that God has placed you there because He needed an air freshener in that place.
- Also notice that it is His fragrance we spread, not our own.

Vs. 15-16

We are the tool God uses among those being saved and those who are perishing. Not everyone is going to like what you have to say and who you represent.

- To some they will love you and enjoy what God has to say to them through your preaching. The word of God will bring life to their life and encourage them to grow in their faith. But to others, they will hate you and maybe even persecute you because you bring judgment to their way of life and they won't want to have to change.

Paul asks, "Who is sufficient for these things?" In other words, who can really do this properly within themselves? The correct answer is, nobody can, we need the Holy Spirit to fill us with the power to do it.

- Notice what Paul says in the very next chapter, 3:4-6. Our sufficiency is only found in Christ for it is He who makes us sufficient.

Vs. 17

Paul wants to distance himself from many of the other false teachers of his day that were "peddling" the word of God. That means they were selling it off cheaply for some gain to themselves.

- Many pastors still try and do this today. They twist and manipulate the scriptures to say what they want them to. They never preach the full counsel of God but only the easy things that the people want to hear.

Paul is calling us to be men of sincerity. Sincerity comes from the latin word, *sin cere*'. It literally means, "without wax." When early farmers would sell their honey in the markets they wanted to show that it was pure, without the honeycomb wax floating in it.

- Paul is telling us here that he wants to preach God's word without impure motives or added teachings that would contaminate the word of God.

Last let's notice that Paul was fully aware that everything he taught and did was in full sight of God. Let us also have this same mind that all that we do, preach, teach, think, all of it is in full view of the Almighty God. May He make us sufficient for such a calling!!

Session Three – “True Shepherds Sacrifice”

We continue our study through John 10 talking about the Pastor being a shepherd in the likeness of Jesus, the Chief Shepherd.

It is Him that we model and His example that we follow.

1. We are called by Him
2. We speak His words with our voice

And third, a true shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

- This calling is a call to sacrifice.

If you thought this was all about you and what your people need to do for you, you are in the wrong place.

A Pastor sacrifices:

- Time
- Money
- Sleep
- Luxuries and comforts
- Entertainment

Look at John 10:11-15

In verse 11 we see the word, “good”. In the greek this word is, “Kalos” meaning worthy, noble and appealing.

Jesus is all of these things and it is demonstrated in how he sacrificed his life for his sheep. It must be the same for us today.

In verse 12 we see a comparison between the shepherd and the hired hand. A hired hand doesn't care about the sheep, only themselves. A hired hand doesn't protect the sheep, only themselves.

To be a good shepherd, you must care about your people.

- Sometimes that means leaving the 99 to go after the 1.

When one of your people are absent from church, it should concern you enough to check on them. Not to keep a record of absence but out of genuine concern for their well-being.

If you have people involved in continual sin, out of love for their soul you must go to them and talk to them.

When there is tragedy and crisis, you must go to them and offer whatever comfort and help you can.

When you see the wolf, who I believe is referencing Satan in this context, closing in on your people, you attack and defend them.

- This is why the shepherd carries the rod and the staff.
- The staff gently corrects the sheep and the rod beats off attackers such as wolves.

Both of these items brings comfort to the sheep as seen in the 23rd Psalm.

So here Jesus is identifying another quality of a shepherd which is sacrifice.

Now let's continue in this idea of sacrifice as found in 2 Corinthians 4:7-12

Vs. 7

Paul tells us that this treasure is the knowledge of the glory of God as found in the face of Jesus Christ. This is an amazing treasure that He has given to us to now give to our people. And the reason he describes us as being jars of clay is because a jar of clay is fragile.

- Our power and sufficiency is found in the power of God, not of us. So we sacrifice our pride at the foot of the cross because that is where the power is.

Vs. 8-12

The Apostle Paul certainly qualifies as an expert on this topic as he will remind us of the personal sacrifices he personally experienced as an Apostle.

Notice also what Paul says in verses 16-18 of this same chapter.

We know that the physical will waste away but the inner self, the spiritual, is renewed day by day. Your sacrifices in the flesh strengthen the spirit to carry on through any pain.

The eternal reward outweighs the present discomforts. We look at the unseen because that is where the eternal is. We will never know the full power of sacrifice this side of heaven.

Finally, look at **Chapter 6:2-10**

Notice Paul calls us servants of God. As a servant we willingly submit ourselves to this calling and all that comes with it, both good and bad.

Session Four – “Go get them and bring them in”

So far what do we know?

- 1- We are called
- 2- We speak His words with our voice
- 3- We sacrifice by laying down our lives

And finally let us return to our text in John 10 looking at verse 16. Here we see a final point that I believe the passage brings out and that is that the shepherd brings in other sheep.

Jesus is saying here that there are still more sheep out there to bring in and we must go and get them. What he is speaking of is the pastor's responsibility to evangelize.

You might say, “But I'm not an evangelist.” You don't have to be, Jesus tells all of us to go!

Thank God for evangelists who clearly have the gift of evangelism and God uses them so powerfully as they have dedicated their lives to this calling and vocation.

But you can't sit around waiting for guys like Scott Nute to come to your villages and cities.

Jesus says, you are a shepherd, go after your sheep. They are out there and you must go and get them.

Too many try to give that responsibility off to someone else. But I believe that every pastor should evangelize by sharing the gospel with the people they meet.

But what happens if we don't. What happens if the sheep stay scattered? What if the shepherd gets fat and lazy living off of the sheep they have and never searches for more?

There is a passage of scripture that answers this question for us and it is found in Ezekiel 34.

This is a prophecy given to Ezekiel that God wants him to say to the people and more importantly to the shepherds themselves. Notice God's first statement against the shepherds of Israel, they have been feeding themselves.

- this is a general sense of selfishness and laziness that God is coming against.

Verse 3 tells us what they were doing. They were only caring for themselves and for their own needs while leaving the sheep unclothed and hungry.

Then in verse 4 we see a list of things they have not been doing which God seems to be saying are things He expects shepherds to do:

- strengthening the weak
- caring for the sick
- helping the injured
- bringing back the strays
- seeking out the lost
- and then God comes against something they were doing which was against His ways and that was them ruling over the sheep with force and harshness.

The result of their selfishness was that God's sheep were scattered and had become food for prey. God obviously loves the sheep and has designed and called out shepherds to care for them. When that is not happening, God comes against the shepherd, Vs. 9.

Now what does this mean for us today? Staying in the analogy of the shepherd as seen in our text of John 10:16, we have an obvious connection to these same duties.

As shepherds under the Chief Shepherd, it is our duty and calling to fulfill this list to the best of our ability. Sometimes we might fail but we cannot stay in that failure, we must get back on our feet and commit to do better.

Do you have weak sheep in your church? God calls you to strengthen them. I believe the only way we can do this is with the word of God, teaching and training them to be stronger in their faith and obedience.

Do you have sick in your church? This could mean a physical sickness and a spiritual sickness. Are you caring for them by prayer and visiting them to see if they have any practical needs?

Do you have any sheep that have been injured by something in this world? Maybe they are mentally wounded and hurting from past experiences. Have you tried to counsel with them using God's word as the source of healing for their struggles.

Maybe you have sheep who are straying away from the fold. God tells us to go to them and at least try to bring them back. You can't force people to come back to church but you can sure warn them if they are slipping into sin. Find out why they are straying.

We all have lost sheep out there to find. These are people who still need to hear the Gospel and need to know their need to be saved. Can you schedule some time in your day that is devoted to evangelism. Maybe you can deliver tracts or just seek them out in the market place. Make time to intentionally seek the lost and bring them in.

I see a common theme in this passage and in the life of every pastor and that is the attitude of caring for others. We preach the truth because we care about the condition and growth of their soul.

We counsel with them because we care about the hurts and obstacles in their lives and we desire that they live in joy and peace. We visit the sick because we care about their well being. We confront the straying because we are concerned for them slipping into the darkness of the world.

All of these must be motivated by a caring heart. A heart that is wholly devoted to the calling placed upon it by God and it is compelled with the love of Christ to lead His people to the green pastures of heaven.