

"Shepherding the Flock of God
(1 Peter 5:1-4)

Introduction: The analogy of a shepherd and his sheep is often used in Scripture to describe the relationship which we sustain to Christ the Great Shepherd, and also to describe the relation of the pastor, which means shepherd, to the flock which the Lord has placed in His charge. The Lord knows that we need His oversight because we like sheep tend to go astray. So He has appointed in His church overseers, that is elders/pastors, to give to you spiritual oversight, counsel, and guidance. What I want you to see in this mornings message is that,

Your shepherds are provided and commanded by the Lord to care for your spiritual well-being.

I. Christ Has Given You Shepherds to Care For You (v. 2)

A. Context.

1. Peter has expressed the need of purity in the church.
2. This purity must begin first with the elders.
3. So now he addresses the leaders.

B. God Commands Them Through the Apostle Peter.

1. Peter is a fellow-elder.
 - a. He identifies himself with them.
 - b. He is a sharer in the oversight of the flock.
 - c. He holds himself out as an example.
2. He is a witness of Christ's sufferings.
 - a. Apostles are witnesses of the resurrection.
 - b. He laid the foundation of the church.
 - c. Of His sufferings recalls a tragic time in his life.
 - (i) He denied Christ three times.
 - (ii) Yet he was restored by grace.
 - (iii) An encouragement to elders to repent.
 - d. Christ's sufferings may encourage them in their's.
3. He is also a sharer in the coming glory.
 - a. He was fully restored.
 - b. The Lord's return now brought anticipation.
 - c. The elders may anticipate as well.

C. The Command Is Directed to Your Elders.

1. Elders are the ruling office in the local church.
 - a. Elder, overseer, pastor are interchangeable.
 - b. They vary with regard to function.
2. There are always a plurality of elders.
 - a. The apostles always appointed more than one.

b. Providing an accountability structure.

D. We, as Your Shepherds, Are Commanded to Care for You.

1. You Are the Flock of God.

- a. Christ is the Shepherd, you are His sheep.
- b. You were purchased with His precious blood [Acts 20:28].
 - (i) He shed His blood to redeem you.
 - (ii) This displays how much He loves you.
 - (iii) Because of your importance, He gives you pastors.

2. Christ gives the care over to His pastors.

- a. Christ is in heaven where He rules through men.
- b. He directly cares for you through His pastors.
- c. It is a very serious duty.

3. We are to shepherd the flock among us.

- a. Shepherd means: to rule, protect, guide, and direct.
 - (i) A shepherd watches over the welfare of the sheep.
 - (ii) He is to exercise oversight, i.e. care for.
- b. To do this he must know the condition of the flock.
- c. We must visit the flock to find out,
 - (i) How you are doing spiritually.
 - (a) Are you growing in your obedience to Christ?
 - (b) Are you gaining victory over sin?
 - (ii) How you are doing in personal study.
 - (a) Are you reading the Bible?
 - (b) Are you reading good Christian literature?
 - (iii) How your family is doing spiritually.
 - (a) Do you have regular family devotions?
 - (b) Are these times beneficial for all?
 - (c) Do you express mutual love and concern?
 - (d) Are you praying for one another?
 - (e) Is there evidence of grace in your children?
 - (1) Are they growing in obedience to you?
 - (2) To the Lord?
 - (3) Are they interested in the things of the Lord?
 - (4) In Bible reading?
 - (5) In prayer?
 - (iv) How your family is doing relationally.
 - (a) Husbands, do you love your wives?
 - (b) Wives, do you love your husbands?
 - (c) Parents, do you love your children?
 - (d) Children, do you love your parents?
 - (e) Are you communicating that regularly?
- d. Unlike real sheep who cannot hide their needs, you may hide yours very well.
 - (i) The state of your house may bring you embarrassment

- (ii) The pastor doesn't come to ridicule, but help.
- (iii) He too is a man of like nature.
- (iv) By God's grace, he has overcome.
- (v) But he is still on the way.
- (vi) And he seeks to help you to as well.

11. Your Shepherds Are To Provide You With a Role Model (v. 2b-3).

A. In The Manner in Which They Exercise Oversight.

- 1. All of you have duties to perform.
 - a. You all have gifts to minister.
 - b. You all have offices to fulfill.
- 2. Elders provide a model in the way they perform their's.
 - a. Not under compulsion, but voluntarily.
 - (i) If under compulsion, then he may drag his feet.
 - (ii) If his desire, then willingly.
 - (iii) You must emulate this model.
 - b. Not to their own advantage, but eager to help you.
 - c. Not as dictators, but as models of Christian virtue.
 - (i) Not to increase their personal authority.
 - (ii) But are to be servant-leader-models.
 - d. Over those allotted to their charge.

B. Also In Their Personal Lives.

- 1. The elder is a model, so the qualifications are high (1T 3).
 - a. His spiritual life.
 - b. His zeal for Biblical knowledge.
 - c. His personal life.
 - d. His family life.
- 2. If he falls short, how can he lead others to that goal?
 - a. This standard is not for the elder alone.
 - b. Rather, he is a model of what you are called to be.
- 3. So the elder is called to be a model.

Conclusion:

- 1. The Lord knows your needs and provides them.
- 2. He has provided for you spiritual oversight to guide you in all things for His glory.
- 3. He has also provided role-models by which you might pattern your life.
- 4. And both of you are promised a gracious reward for obedience.
 - a. The elder who labors well, the eternal crown of glory (v. 4)
 - (i) Sometimes his labors seem fruitless.

(ii) He must look to Christ to see the value.

b. The obedient flock, the "crown of righteousness" (2T 4:8).

5. So heed well the admonition of the writer to the Hebrews, "Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you."