

The Care of the Good Shepherd

Part 1

Speaker	Milton Jamieson
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[00:00:01] Good afternoon, beloved brothers and sisters. Good to be back with you in Plum Lane. And I have seen some faces that I have not seen before. You don't look strange, though.

Just that I have not seen you before. As we...

Well, before it was on my thoughts, our brother Michael, in his prayer, mentioned the thought of the care of the Lord to us. And I thought to look at the shepherd's care that we have in St. John, chapter 10. From earlier scriptures, the Lord forbid if I should bring any new thing to you. But the same old thing, which I just want to refresh your memory. As Peter tells us, to stir up our pure minds by putting you in memory of these things.

[00:01:04] In St. John, chapter 10, we have the Lord Jesus presented before us as a good shepherd.

And I trust that my speech, you are able to understand my speech, everybody. And therefore I want to talk slowly, as I have been talking. Is that too fast for you? I hope not. And I trust then that we can benefit from the few thoughts. And I hope also to leave room for if there is another with an exercise to share. Let the prophet speak to our three. St. John, chapter 10, and verse 11.

He says, I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. [00:02:05] And if I might say, this is the first indication of the care that we have here. Is that he gave his all.

The good shepherd gave his life for the sheep. We have good friends and relatives. And yet we are not prepared, all of us or none of us, to give our lives for them. But the Lord Jesus, because of his great love, with which he loved us, that he gave his life for the sheep.

And we have in the Ephesians, chapter 5, verse 25, I think, that Christ loved the church and gave himself for her or for it. [00:03:01] The apostle Paul speak that the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

So individual as well as the whole church can say Christ loved me and gave himself for me. So great is his love. We have in one of four hymns that in the dark domain of death his deep affection prove.

And there Adam was put to sleep put into a deep sleep and the rib was taken to build the woman. But

the Lord Jesus not going to a deep sleep of which Adam's deep sleep was a picture of, but he went into death itself. And there he prove his love. There he found us in death. [00:04:02] And he given us life.

And he referred to us as his sheep. As his sheep.

And it is the greatness of the care of the Lord Jesus. In verse 12 he says, But he that is in hireling and not the sheep whose own the sheep are not, saith the wolf coming, and leave it the sheep.

And the wolf catches them and scatters them. Now this is what we find in the hireling.

But the Lord Jesus is quite different. He stood between the wolf and the sheep.

He defends the sheep.

[00:05:03] He not only died for them, but he lives to defend the sheep.

And he could say, I am the door.

By me if any man enter in. Now for the wolf to get to the sheep they have to come by the Lord Jesus. His protective care.

He protects and he defends his own.

And the wolf cannot touch them for he keeps them. The desire of the wolf.

We are told that of the apostle Paul in about the closing years he says, I know this. That after my departing grievous wolf shall enter among you not sparing the flock.

And also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things [00:06:03] to draw away disciples after them. What is perverse thing?

Things that is not according to scripture.

But it sound good. But it's not the word of God. And these came up to scatter the flock and to bring havoc amongst the people of God. But the Lord Jesus he keep the flock together.

He keep the flock together. So the wolf flee because, well the hireling flee because he's an hireling. And as we are told in verse 13 because he's an hireling and care it not for the sheep.

The care.

[00:07:03] The enemy don't care.

The enemy goal and desire is to scatter.

The Lord desire that we be together.

We be together.

He care for us.

And this word care is a very important word.

Very important word.

It's a small word.

But very weighty word.

We are told that the body should have the same care one for the other. So if one member suffer, the other suffer with it. [00:08:01] You see some people are cover up in bed, lying down in hospital bed. Say, what's the matter with you? Oh, it is my hand. It's my finger.

It's my tooth.

Simple areas of our body, small areas of our body affected. A nerve resting on another affect the whole body. So we are intertwined in Christ.

And there are to be that mutual care one for the other.

I can't do without you brethren. I can't do without you. And if you think you can do without me, you make a sad mistake.

We need one another.

I might just be, I know, a blood vessel is too important.

But whatever the smallest part [00:09:02] of the body you can think of. But each one of us have our use. And we are cared for by the Lord.

And we are to render the care one towards another. If we look at the word care as an acrostic.

Care. Sometime brethren, we might have to carry one another. Carry, lift up one another and carry them literally.

And that's care.

I heard that when John the Apostle was old, they actually carried him to the meeting.

Yes, literally carry him to the meeting.

And there are others that we might have to carry in other ways.

Carry them along with us. [00:10:02] Make sure they are coming. Esau said, let's go to Mount Seir today.

Jacob said, you know that the little ones are with me. And if we overdrive them in one day, they will perish.

Let me continue at a country pace that they can go. So sometime we have to wait for one another in that sense. Carry them along with us.

Don't leave our wives and children behind. I'm sad to say, but sometime husbands are full of the knowledge of Christ and their wives and children are novices. They don't know.

Let's carry our wives and children along. Let's make sure that all in the fellowship understand what we are saying. [00:11:01] You carry one another with us as we go. We are not outgrown and the other is left there. That kind of idea. But whether it is literal or in a spiritual sense, care means to carry.

Care means to assist.

Assist one another.

To assist a brethren in various ways. You can assist.

One of the great gifts that we have in scripture is a gift that is called help. Help. You know which gift was most called for in the days of the apostles? The gift help. He got a vision.

A man from Macedonia said, come over here.

Our apostles, our pastors, our teachers. He said, and help us.

Help. [00:12:01] Just help somebody. Help somebody to understand perhaps. Whatever way we can help.

Help is care.

It is part of the shepherd. The shepherd care. The hireling do not care. Care is rendered to all.

In the word care, it is not only that you might have to assist. There comes a time you might have to restore. Might have to restore.

Restore one another.

Restore a failing brother or sister.

We are told that it is those who are spiritual are to restore such a one [00:13:01] in the spirit of meekness. The Lord restore. David could say, he restored my soul. The Lord said, well prophetically, he said, I restore that which I took not away. He restore all things for God, yes. But to restore us.

Which one of us can say the Lord has not restored us? Why art thou cast down on my soul? Hope thou in God. He restore us in various ways. The Lord restore.

But in the matter of care, we need to encourage.

Encourage one another. Encourage one another. Encouragement over and over and over the apostle Paul writes. Encourage one another.

As also he do.

[00:14:01] Encourage one another with these words. Encourage and comfort one another. He keep saying, encouragement is good, beloved. Sometimes you see the brothers, you know, would up here.

And you say, oh, they know the word. They don't need any encouragement. I'm the one who need encouragement. Encourage those brothers who minister the word. And it is simple. Sometimes you can encourage them. Just to tell them that you enjoy some little thing that they have said. That you notice something that you never noticed quite like that before. It's an encouragement. If you begin to heap a whole lot, don't do that. It's swell the head.

Swell the head.

But a little encouragement is good. And notice that he says, encourage one another. [00:15:01] So I encourage you. You encourage me. We pass on encouragement to one another. Everybody is encouraged. Or else we're going to be cast down. We're going to be discouraged. And we're going to, when discouragement comes in, beloved, stress comes in. All kind of other problems begin to develop. But let us encourage one another. And it's a part of godly care.

A shepherd render that care for us.

Notice that in verse 14, I should say, welcome Brother Lloyd. And Brother Lloyd is from Jamaica. For those who missed the morning meeting and did not meet him before. And we are reading in St. John chapter 10.

Verse 14. I am the good shepherd and know my sheep [00:16:04] and am known of mine.

The Lord says, I know my sheep.

He has full knowledge of every one of us.

He knows our name. He knows where we live. He knows what we are doing. It just casts your thought back to Acts chapter 9.

Speaking to Ananias, he say, go in the street, which is called straight.

Inquire in the house of Judas for one Saul.

Behold, he prayed.

Full knowledge.

Place, name, and doing.

[00:17:02] He knows, beloved. He knows the state of the sheep. He knows their name. He knows their circumstances. Their fears and the pain sometimes.

The heartaches.

When you go alone and kneel and wept before him, he knows and he bottle up those tears in his vial.

He find them precious. When you cannot share your burden with anyone else, he knows.

He know us completely.

He know his sheep. And the sheep know him. And they know his voice.

And a stranger they will not follow. For they know not the voice of strangers, but will flee from the stranger.

The Lord know his own.

[00:18:01] And his own know him.

This is a mark of all God's sheep, that they know the Lord.

In verse 16, it says, and other sheep I have, which are not of this foal. Them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one foal, or flock, and one shepherd.

Other sheep we know very well, referred to the Gentiles, which was to come in.

Here the shepherd is looking out there for some others that need to come. And we also must have that outlook.

I want to apply it in this way.

[00:19:04] For others who are out there in our circumstances, probably scattered by the wolf, are perhaps discouraged at home and their circumstances.

Don't take this as teaching now, this part of it. The teaching is that the other sheep is the Gentiles. But I'm applying it in our circumstances, that we are to look up our brethren. We are to look them up and encourage them, too, to come. And we might be a testimony in one place, so to speak.

I do not think I could close unless I read a few verses, [00:20:01] and I shall be quicker this time. In Ezekiel 34.

Ezekiel 34. We are dealing with the good shepherd. In verse 11, he says, For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I, even I, will both search out my sheep and seek them out.

The Lord is doing a searching and a seeking out of his sheep.

And as the word is to Christendom and to great Babylon, Come out of her, my people. The Lord is doing that today.

[00:21:03] He's still gathering a people for himself.

And it is still the light in a group of people, exercise in heart, in affection, and in obedience to his word, gathered to his name, that a replica of what he had started on earth be present till he come. And so he's searching out. There are some who are out there. And he's using us, you brethren, to help in this search for them. You know, it sweetens me when I read about Isaiah. Not Isaiah.

Elijah.

No, getting old.

Elijah thought that he was left alone.

[00:22:02] And there was not another. And it would appear so when he alone stood at Mount Carmel. He alone standing for God. And the Lord says to him, I have reserved 7,000 in Israel that have not bowed their knees, nor kissed the statue of Baal.

Good news.

But how is he going to find those 7,000 to have fellowship with them? Well, he need to do perhaps some walking around. He meet a man or a woman. He says, have you ever bowed your knees or kissed the statue of Baal? No. Well, brother, good.

This is one of them, he's assured. He go to another.

And so he go on his search out. And as he find them, he realize that this is one of them I can fellowship with. [00:23:06] It's the same thing we have today. That while the great host exists, and a man must purge himself from unclean vessels, he says, follow peace and righteousness.

I'm not quoting it correctly. And love and faith with them that call upon the name of the Lord out of pure heart. But there's another word I miss. It says, let me read it. I'm misquoting it. 2 Timothy 2.

Verse 19.

Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, and having to seal the Lord night them that are his, and let every one that name it the name of Christ depart from iniquity. [00:24:05] And that's the part I want. That how are we going to know those whom we can fellowship with? Those who have departed from iniquity. Simple.

It is simple as that. Those who have departed from iniquity, we can fellowship with them. But if they have not departed from iniquity, we have to say, I love you in the Lord, but we cannot walk together. Me and my brother might be walking along, going along. I notice you don't have much of this in London as I pass through. But you might call upon mud and water and things there.

And my brother decide that he's going straight into the mud and water. Then we part company there.

[00:25:02] I go around it.

You see what I mean? So I don't want to get the mud on me, but we have to part company if he insists that he's going through the mud. Let them who name the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

And when we see that, we say, yes. See one there? That one named the name of Christ. That's the test, really.

Now I speed up, I say. And just a number of I will emphasize and move on. In verse 12, he says, As a shepherd seeketh out the flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered, so will I seek out my sheep and will deliver them out of all the places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. [00:26:04] Well, this have reference, we know, to the day of the Lord. But we can have primary reference to Israel, but we can apply some of these things to ourselves. Again, in verse 13, I will bring them out from the people and gather them from the countries and will bring them to mine own land and feed them upon the mountain of Israel by the rivers and in all the habitable places of the country. The Lord desire to feed his people. He not only going to search them out, he's going to bring them and feed them. That is what he desire. And then, verse 14, I will feed them in a good pasture and upon the mountain of Israel shall their foal be. There they shall lie down in good foal and in a fat pasture they shall feed. [00:27:02] They shall feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed my flock and cause them to lie down, says the Lord God. I will seek that which was lost and bring again that which was driven away and will bind up that which was broken and will strengthen that which was sick and so on.

What the things the Lord will do, he says, that I will feed my flock and I will bring them again. I will bind up the broken ones and I will strengthen those who are sick. These are some of the promises that Israel can claim. But the shepherd care, for we know him as our shepherd.

[00:28:02] Not only Israel, not only he's called the shepherd of Israel, not only David can say he's my shepherd, but he is our good shepherd.

He is our great shepherd ascended now.

I have been raised from the dead and ascended. And he is our chief shepherd who is about to come.

And so, beloved, the care of the shepherd and his love to us that caused him to go to Calvary's cross and die there for our sake has affected my own heart and I trust it do yours as well.