

The Shepherd

Part 1

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[00:00:00] I'd just like to read three short passages, the first in John's Gospel, Chapter 10, Verse 11, I am the Good Shepherd, the Good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. Hebrews, Chapter 13, Verse 20, Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make your perfect and ever good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. First Peter, Chapter 5, Verse 4, And when the chief shepherd shall appear, he shall receive a crown of glory, [00:01:25] That filled it not away.

I was minded, beloved brethren, to speak about the Lord coming for us, because that is the hope that we should have all this before us. But while listening to our brother, this impression was forced upon me to speak of the pattern, the patterned shepherd.

Our brother is speaking about practical matters relating to oversight, overseership. [00:02:03] And I have been challenged, I'm sure all of us, young and old, have been challenged as to these practical matters. But let us look at Christ. Let us see in God's standard what is the standard for us.

These three references to the shepherd, these are what is past, what is present, and what is future.

A really wonderful thing to think of it, that the Lord has provided for us in all of these three relationships. When we were without hope and without God in this world, indeed even before we were born, God provided for the need of mankind, and in due time, as we read, in the fullness of time.

[00:03:07] Christ came, he came on the law, to redeem those on the law.

He speaks, or the Spirit of God speaks of him in chapter 10 of John's Gospel as a good shepherd. As we think of him in this regard, our hearts touch.

Our brother has given some examples of how a shepherd would take care of a sheep. But think of the Lord Jesus.

What did he do?

It says the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

That is really the ultimate.

There is nothing that anyone could do that measured to this.

[00:04:01] He gave his life.

We read that he who was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor.

We think of him.

When he was presented in the temple, his parents were so poor that they could not offer a normal sacrifice. They had to offer the poor man's sacrifice. Two turkey dogs, or two young pigeons. He became poor.

When he was born, there was no room for him. In the inn, he was laid in a manger.

When he wanted to pay, when Peter said that they were to pay the tribute money, the Lord had no money. So he said to Peter, go down and catch a fresh fish, and the money will be in his mouth. The Lord, in speaking to one, he says, the bells of heaven are of roosting places, and the foxes of holes. [00:05:04] But the son of man has not where to lay his head. He became poor, for our sakes.

And then finally, he gave his life for us. If we are going to do any service for the Lord, we need to have some sense of what the Lord has done for us. It is to stimulate in our hearts a sense of our own weakness and failure, and the greatness and perfection of Christ.

And if that does not happen, then we will get spiritually puffed up.

We will regard ourselves as having attained.

The great apostle Paul, who comes nearest to the Lord in the New Testament, he says in Philippians, [00:06:05] not that I have already attained, but I press forward. When we think of Paul, in his ministry, in his life, and in the things that happened to him, he came very close to the Lord, but then he sinned. He was rejected in Jerusalem, and he was rejected in Rome. The Lord suffered the same fate. But here, the Lord Jesus, he went to the utmost.

He gave his life for the sheep.

You might say that he was crucified by crow lands.

What does the Spirit say? Whom by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hands of wicked men, have crucified and slain. [00:07:04] So we have God's side. It is by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. But man's responsibility is there. Man killed the Savior.

But then he says, no man take it, my life, from me. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it again. The Lord gave his life.

In speaking of it, he says, this is my body, which is given for you.

This is my blood, which is poured out for you. We know not a place that says that his blood was shed. We know that there are tears to side.

But the Lord, in speaking of it, he says, this is my body, which is given for you. This is my blood, which is poured out for you. The idea of it pouring out is the sacrificial side. It is something like what we read of in Philippians, that Paul was speaking about the drink offering, [00:08:03] that it be poured out as a libation upon the sacrifice of your soul. The Lord poured out in a sacrificial way his blood.

He died for us.

In Hebrews, he lives for us.

He died for us in John.

He lives for us in Hebrews.

And in Peter, he is coming for us.

Today, the Lord is in glory.

We ended the reading that he was received up in glory. He shall come in glory, in the glorious manifestation, when he shall come with the saints, the unveiling of the glory of the Son of Man. But now he lives, and he lives for us.

We are told that he ever liveth to make intercession for us. [00:09:01] He ever liveth.

We are reminded of those most forceful words, Who shall bring a charge against God's enemies? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ who has died. Today, he is alive in heaven.

He comes to us in a special way at the Lord's Supper. He reminded us, I will not leave your offerings. I am coming to you.

He comes amongst us when we are gathered, and as we make room for him, he exercises his headship in direction, in wisdom, in food, so that the flock might be fed.

We might say, as another said, the heart of a man beats in heaven. And as Paul tells us in Hebrews, that Christ being in glory is the guarantee that we are going to be there. [00:10:04] And as the hymn so nicely puts it, and we are great for runners see, in his own glory there, yet not ashamed with such as we, as firstborn, all to share. We shall be there with him. But in the meantime, he lives for us.

And as it says, that is connected with the resurrection.

And there are some beautiful expressions used in that reference in Hebrews.

Now the God of peace.

What an expression in relation to this particular context of the resurrection. The God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of

the everlasting covenant.

[00:11:03] We have been told, and we can see the likeness of it, that resurrection is a fundamental truth of Christianity. And here we have brought in a first way to us the fact of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Of course Paul tells us in a very detailed way as to the fact of the resurrection of Christ in 1 Corinthians 15. He says, now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. There is no question. Remember that the Jews, they tried to conceal the fact that the Lord was raised from the dead.

They told a lie.

We are told that that lie is currently believed among the Jews to this day. But the time is coming when they shall look upon him whom they have pierced. But in the meantime, we are assured in our souls [00:12:05] as to this fundamental truth, as to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

And his work as a great shepherd is to make us perfect in every good work. Whether it be in relation to overseership, or whatever work it might be, to make us perfect in every good work. Working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. I just refer briefly to his coming, and this reference has to do with the kingdom. In 1 Peter 5.

It says, And when the shepherd shall appear, he shall receive a crown of glory. This has to do with reward. This has to do with faithfulness in regard of responsibility. And what we are speaking about, largely in the readings, [00:13:03] has to do with responsibility. It is noteworthy that in 1 Timothy, except I think in the salutation, that the Father is not mentioned. It's God and men.

And that is very important because generally speaking, I say generally because we should not be absolute in any statement, but generally speaking, when God is referred to, it has to do with man's responsibility. And when the Father is spoken of, it has to do mainly with privilege and favor. And that is what we get primarily in 1 Timothy. God in relation to man, whether it is man generally, or mankind in relation to the house of God, it is God and it is man's responsibility. And so this reference here has to do with the reward for being faithful in our responsibility. And this is not the side of grace, which was really on my heart, to speak about that the Lord is going to come for us. [00:14:02] There's much that is being said today in the world of Christendom that would seek to negate the coming of the Lord, commonly called the rapture. And while the word is not used in scripture, we have good warrant for using it, because the word used in 1 Thessalonians 4 is caught up, and it is derived from a Latin word, which means rapture.

And so while the word itself is not used in scripture, we are quite in order to say the rapture of the saints, but the Lord himself shall descend from heaven. The Lord himself.

He's not sending an angel for us. And I often say this, and I believe it is true. You know, the archangel Michael was detained. And it is possible that an angel might be detained. And Satan is a prince of the power of the air. And one final display of the triumph of the Lord Jesus, and our sharing in that triumph, is that he himself is going to come and take us [00:15:02] to that area where Satan is a prince of the power of the air, and take us to the Father's house. But that's not what we have in Peter. What we have in Peter is the event that will occur after that, when he shall come with his own. And he says, when he shall appear, he shall receive a crown of glory.

Paul elsewhere speaks about the crown of life. But here it is a crown of glory. That those who have been faithful in any measure to the Lord, here in responsibility, will have a sense of glory.

The crown of glory.

So that in the parable that the Lord said, that certain ones were given the talents, and one gained ten talents, and he says, it shall reign over ten cities. I believe it has some connection with the crown of glory. And another gained five talents, and he was given five cities to reign over. [00:16:02] But then the other one, he was slothful. He did not know his master. He said that he would reap what he had sown, and that sort of thing. Oh, that we should know the heart of the Lord. The grace of the Lord. The love of the Lord. That he will take care of us in every way, whether it is in relation to what our great need was in mercy, he met that need as a good shepherd. What we need at the present time, he supplies as a great shepherd. And in the future, when he shall come as a chief shepherd, what a joy it will be when we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.