

Be a Good Shepherd

(Part 1)

'The word of the Lord came to me: 'Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds: prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to the shepherds who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. So they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and when they were scattered they became food for all the wild animals. My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them.' (Ezekiel 34:1-6)

Who can say to himself that he is a shepherd? Anyone who claims to have authority over any group of people, in the language of the Holy Bible and in front of God, he is a shepherd. Are you a father or mother? You are a shepherd to your household. Are you a director or a manager? You are the shepherd to your company. Are you a governor or a king? You are the shepherd to your people. Are you a leader, a teacher, a worker, a minister, a bishop or a pastor? You are the shepherd to your congregation.

Today God wants to speak to all of us. His word was given to prophet Ezekiel, directed to leaders of the nation. But the word of God is living, active and powerful, and it suits all times, all places, and all people. It might be heavy, but let us pray that we can bear it, for after all it is good. The word of God will not return void but it will give fruit, not only to the lives of the shepherds but also to the sheep. From the above chosen passages taken from Ezekiel chapter 34, let us consider the following questions that will speak to everyone of us, whether we are the sheep or the shepherd.

1) Are you taking care of the flock, or yourself? 'Are you fat and your sheep are lean?' 'Are you warm and your sheep is shivering?' Everyone created in flesh is ego centered. He thinks about himself first, if not all the time. He does things to pamper himself, and as long as he feels good he thinks all is taken care of. If that is you, you are not the shepherd but you are like the thief and robber who have entered the sheep pen not through the gate. **'I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate climbs in by some other way, is a thief and robber. The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep.'** (John 10:1-2) But the man who is born in Spirit is convinced by the Spirit of God. He who believes in his heart and confess in his mouth that Jesus Christ is the Saviour and Lord who died on the cross and was raised from the dead, will come to a turning point. As he experiences the overflowing love of Christ, he will have the desire to be changed from feeding himself first towards feeding others first and just be satisfied with the remnants. He will not desire to clothe himself with the best, but he will buy clothes for the people under his care, whether in winter or summer. He will become a good shepherd who keeps doing good things for his own sheep. He will lead them in a green pasture and a good grazing land. To an ordinary person such work is tiring. But when the Spirit of God is upon you, your joy will be to feed your sheep and to clothe them first before yourself.

This is the spirit of stewardship. In your hands you have everything but nothing belongs to you, instead you give for the people under your hand. The choicest animal that you keep to strengthen yourself, when the stewardship spirit falls on you, you will no longer keep it for your own, but give it to the hungry as you desire to please and obey the commands of the Master and Lord Jesus Christ. **'When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?' Yes, Lord,' he said, 'you know that I love you.'** Jesus said, **'Feed my lambs.'** (John 21:15)

2) Are you protecting the sheep, or you want to be protected? Jesus said, **'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.'** (John 10: 11-13) The real shepherd of the flock is never a coward who like the hired men runs away in times of danger, trouble, or persecution. The hired men are concerned about life. The shepherd is concerned about the life of his sheep. The hired man runs away to be protected because he has no courage and strength to fight his enemies. But the shepherd is always ready to fight for the protection and life of his flock. He loves his sheep and he will not allow anyone to be stolen or be killed. The shepherd is bold, strong, willing to sacrifice and even to die for his sheep. He leads with power because the Lord God Almighty is with him, for the power of the Holy Spirit is promised to him who brings the good news of salvation. As a result, the sheep are well-protected, secure and warm if they are under the leadership of a shepherd called and sent by God. **Again Jesus said, 'Simon son of John, do you truly love me?' He answered, 'Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.'** Jesus said, **'Take care of my sheep.'** (John 21:16)

3) Are you the shepherd, or you are only a sheep? This question is strange but it will explain your situation right now. Are you a leader, or you ought to be led? You may shout or silently say, 'I am the leader!' But, the word of God speaks to you: **'Because you shove with flank and shoulder, butting all the weak sheep with your horns until you have driven them away. I will save my flock, and they will no longer be plundered. I will judge between one sheep and another.'** (Ezekiel 43: 21-22) There is one statement in Economy that tells the same, 'Bad currency expels the good currency from the market.' Unfortunately, if you have done the same you are not the shepherd after all. Did you push towards the top position by your muscle power and world's influence? It was not given to you smoothly, but taken after a fight, shedding of blood, and sequences of plot and conspiracies, until there was no one in the yard to compete with you, so you announced: 'I am the winner, the king, the leader!' You gained it by your flesh so you kept it by your hand's fist, and not by the Spirit of God. You are not the shepherd! According to the above description you are only the thief or a hired hand who stole or kept something not belonging to you. If you are gaining certain privileges in your position now, don't be tempted or enticed, for your gain will go in vain if you do not consider God's original plan.

My Dear and Beloved: May be you are satisfied for this day's share. But first, we need to apply what we have already received. Later on will continue further.

My Prayer: Father God I come before in the name of Jesus. Lord I repent from the following sins _____. Lord clothes me with humility, I want to serve you with all my heart. This is my prayer in Jesus name, Amen.