

How The Living Jesus Christ Shepherds You

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[0 : 0 0] today's sermon text is john 21 beginning at verse 15 until the end verse 25 this will be our last sermon in this glorious gospel do you remember how the book of john began john 1 with this great prologue in the beginning was the word many have said this last chapter this last portion is an epilogue it really sums up major themes from the entire book so as we're reading our sermon text today listen for those different themes from throughout this entire book as i read this i invite each one who has the holy spirit to receive god's word as it's inspired inerrant infallible clear and sufficient the very word of god himself for his people when they had eaten breakfast jesus asked simon peter simon son of john do you love me more than these yes lord he said to him you know that i love you feed my lambs he told him a second time he asked him simon son of john do you love me yes lord he said to him you know that i you know that i love you shepherd my sheep he told him he asked him a third time simon son of john do you love me peter was grieved that he had asked him the third time do you love me he said lord you know that i love you feed my sheep jesus said truly i tell you when you were younger you would tie your belt and walk wherever you wanted but when you grow old you will stretch out your hands and someone else will tie you and carry you where you don't want to go he said this to indicate by what kind of death peter would glorify god after saying this he told him follow me so peter turned around and saw the disciple jesus loved following them the one who had leaned back against jesus at the supper and asked lord who is the one that's going to betray you and when peter saw him he said to jesus lord what about him if i want him to remain until i come jesus answered what is that to you as for you follow me so this rumor spread to the brothers and sisters that the disciple would not die yet jesus did not tell him he would not die but if i want him to remain until i come what is that to you this is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down we know that his testimony is true and there are also many other things that jesus did which if every one of them were written down i suppose not even the world itself could contain the books that would be written this is the word of god thanks be to god you may be seated the grass withers the flower fades but the word of the lord stands forever let's pray oh living god through the ministry of your word by the power of the holy spirit would you please show us your love fill us with your love that we will follow you today

we ask this for christ's sake amen i invite you to picture yourself seated with a white lab coat on and a clipboard in front of you that's a checklist and you're a medical doctor one of your patients comes in and sits down in front of you you ask them tell me what's wrong they began listing all of their symptoms see if you can diagnose them diagnose them correctly anxiousness tiredness unusual irritability feeling cold weakness slow wound healing chronic exhaustion loss of muscle delayed development low energy level and stunted growth these symptoms describe a person who has been physically malnourished a person who has not been fed a good healthy diet parents are responsible to feed their children among other things good shepherds are responsible to watch the condition of their flock make sure that these little lambs and these sheep do not get malnourished feed them milk when they're little grow them into solid food don't let their growth be stunted the condition of a flock it reflects the quality of the shepherd my message for you today beloved congregation of our lord jesus christ it's how the living jesus christ shepherds you how the living jesus christ shepherds you i'd like to walk through this sermon text with six questions the first one is this who does the living jesus christ shepherd who is it that jesus shepherds i'm using the word shepherd as a verb that's the meaning in these these verses 15 16 and 17 it means to tend to care for to provide all that's needed including the food so who is it that jesus christ shepherds we read in verse 15 when they had broken the fast by dining and jesus christ said to peter tend my lambs verse 16 shepherd my sheep verse 17 feed my sheep there's one word that doesn't change and it's the possessive pronoun these are christ's who is it that christ shepherds my sheep my lamb my

sheep Jesus tends his lambs he gives his sheep who are his he gives them good food and he matures them he cares for them he watches over them in John 10 he had said I am the good shepherd and the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep so who are these who are his sheep it's the ones he laid down his life for he feeds those for whom he laid down his life he feeds you who belong to him first Peter 1 18 and 19 the same apostle listen to how he turned around and preached this to the church he says that God feeds those whom he purchased whom he ransomed with his own precious blood in John 10 3 Jesus says that he calls his own sheep by name and he leads them out so who is it that he feeds he feeds you who he has called who he has let out he feeds you who are following him John 10 4 he says that the shepherd goes before them and the sheep follow him for they know his voice do you know the voice of Jesus as your good shepherd he feeds you who know his voice this same apostle John in the book of Revelation Revelation 7 17 he gets this glorious picture of where all these sheep from all these different people nation tribes and tongues are heading and it's an image of a shepherd guiding those sheep to springs of living water and he promises to wipe away every tear from their eyes Jesus feeds his he feeds his own he feeds you who belong to him you who know his voice and follow him and he does this because the flock's condition reflects the shepherd Jesus Christ shepherds you in the condition of your soul it's a reflection of his shepherding he knows you he cares for you he protects you he feeds you like a good shepherd because you are a reflection of his care that's who the living Jesus Christ shepherds it's those for whom he laid down his life it's those he called and those who follow him second question he feeds you what's the food so what is your food from the hand of Jesus Christ your good shepherd

Jesus says you are mine you need food because he's telling Peter three times feed my lambs shepherd them feed them I read to you that diagnosis of a person that has been physically malnourished think about a spiritual diagnosis for these spiritual symptoms anxiousness anxiousness tiredness unusual irritability feeling cold weakness slow wound healing chronic exhaustion loss of muscle delayed development low energy level stunted spiritual growth these describe those who belong to God whom Christ has purchased but who are spiritually malnourished can you look back on a time when you were not being fed from God's word on a healthy balanced diet many of us have felt these symptoms and maybe you're feeling some of them right now as Paul was ministering to the church in Corinth in chapter 3 he said when you were little like lambs you were not ready for solid food you got the basic of the gospel but now you need to be moving on to the solid things you need to eat it all as you grow in Christ or else your growth is going to be stunted you're going to remain malnourished it's God's word is our food it's God's word alone that can feed our soul the Bible has always described God's word as food listen to Deuteronomy 8 3-5 he humbled you and he let you hunger he fed you to make you know what Jesus quoted in Matthew 4-4 man does not live by bread alone but on every word from the mouth of the Lord the word of God is the food for our soul

Jeremiah 15-16 says your words were found and I ate them and your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart for I have been called by your name O Lord God of hosts John introduced Jesus in chapter 1 as the word of God and Jesus in John 6-35 said I am the bread of life whoever comes takes and eats of me will never grow hungry so what is the food that our souls need our souls need the food of Christ's work for us the person and work of Jesus Christ as it's been revealed and it is contained in all of the Bible that's why we read the Bible and it feeds us as the spirit ministers the work of Christ to our souls a flock's condition reflects the shepherd and the living [12:56] Jesus Christ he is the good shepherd who knows you cares for you protects you and he feeds you he feeds you from his hand through the ministry of his word because your soul is a reflection of his shepherding care so the food is the word of God the person and work of Jesus Christ as it's revealed in all of the Bible the third question is this how does God feed you this word this food how does the living Jesus Christ feed you and me well Peter is being raised up to feed the church God gives you food through ministers that Christ has called ministers that Christ himself has fed and ministers who Christ himself has charged to feed you in verse 15 when they had broken their fast by dining Jesus said to Peter feed my lambs in verse 16 feed my sheep verse 17 feed my sheep a true shepherd shepherd of Jesus Christ does not feed his own ego the reason for this is because you can only be a true shepherd if you are already full from the nourishment that you received from Jesus

Christ himself did you notice how chapter 15 began after Jesus had prepared the bread and the fish and called them to himself sat them down hosted them he fed their bodies now he's feeding Peter he's healing and restoring Peter he's leaving Peter full of grace only then will Peter be qualified to turn around and feed and tend to the flock of Christ and that's the charge Peter gives to other elders that get raised up in the church in 1 Peter 5 2 Peter wrote shepherd the flock of God that is among you exercising oversight not under compulsion but willingly as God would have you not for shameful gain but eagerly because you've already been made so full by Jesus Christ not as a proud man but as one who has been humbled like Peter who has publicly been made to confess his love for Christ just as he denied

Christ three times Christ graciously allows him to confess his love for Christ publicly as well not as one who is desperate and needs the world to give him something but one who has already been made whole by the Lord Jesus Christ himself and Peter gives this promise in chapter 5 when the chief shepherd appears Jesus is the chief shepherd and he is coming back for his own every minister that God raises up is an under shepherd of Jesus Christ the chief shepherd and he will give you his unfading crown of glory Romans 10 verses 12 through 15 we have this glorious chain that's set up how can a sinner be believing and turned and repenting to be saved how can that even happen and Paul logically broke it down this way how could a sinner hear the gospel without a preacher and how could the preacher preach to that sinner unless that preacher has been sent by the church and we hear in

Ephesians 4 11 that the Lord Jesus Christ he gives to a congregation some men that will be shepherd dash teachers so that you can hear so that you can believe so that you can be fed so that you can have hope Charles Spurgeon in the 1800s in London he wrote don't go where it's all fine music and grand talk and beautiful architecture those things will not feed your soul go where the gospel is preached the gospel that really feeds your soul and go often don't be malnourished spiritually a flock's condition reflects on the shepherd the living Jesus Christ is your good shepherd and he knows you he calls you he feeds you he protects you he will mature you your soul's condition reflects on

Jesus Christ so how does he feed you he gives you food through ministers that Christ has called fed and charged fourth question through what type of minister does Christ feed you through what type of minister does Christ feed you I think Peter is a wonderful pattern here are three observations about Peter in this sermon text number one Peter is ordinary I believe Christ with the language he uses underscores that number two Peter is one who has been humbled before Jesus Christ and number three Peter is a man who God has repurposed ordinary humbled repurposed through what type of minister does Christ feed his lambs now notice in our passage Jesus three times when addressing Peter he gives him a full name and he doesn't call him the rock he doesn't call him Cephas or

[18:43] Peter well he does Peter but not Cephas not the new name so he says you are Simon the son of John in John chapter 1 verse 42 this is how Jesus first engages Peter way back in the first chapter he calls him Simon son of Jonah or John you shall be called Cephas we read in John 13 remember when this glorious last few days are taking place and it's the last supper John 13 37 Peter says to Jesus I will lay down my life for you and here's all the other disciples listening in and Peter is making this big promise he's over confident and he's boasting in front of all the other disciples that his love for Christ is so superior it is a self sacrificing love Jesus simply responds in John 13 he asked Peter will you lay down your life for me he says before the rooster crows three times you will have denied me three times so the

Lord Jesus takes an ordinary man Simon son of John and he humbles him next and there's Peter we read in our sermon text that Peter was greatly troubled he was grieved because Jesus kept asking him do you really love me in Peter's low moment of being humbled I love this encouragement from John Flavel he said as God did not at first choose you because you were high so he will not forsake you because you are low in fact Christ had to make you low Peter in order to charge you and give you any authority so three times Jesus calls him by his old name Simon son of Jonah or John Peter you are an ordinary man this is your old name the first time Jesus asked him do you agape me agape is an unconditional self self sacrificing love that expects nothing in return Peter had said I'll lay down my life for you and the first time Jesus says do you agape me and Peter says I phileo you phileo is an outward affection of a dear friend but it's not agape someone said if agape is 100% love that only God can perfectly demonstrate phileo is like

40% it's mere affection that I could show Peter says Jesus you challenged me in John 13 do you really love me will you really follow me and I failed miserably so every time Peter answers he says Lord you know I phileo this is what I bring back to you

Peter says I phileo you Peter had to be humbled he's an ordinary man made low but this public restoration of Peter is kind see he turns around and there's all the other disciples do you really love me more than these it could have been he's pointing to the nets and the boats I think more likely he's pointing to the disciples that seems to be the context do you love me better than any other disciple so publicly Peter is having to confess his sin confess his limitation confess Lord you have humbled me and I profess that I do love you the best that I can that's all I can give in verse 18 Jesus says I'm sorry in John 13 verse 18 Jesus said blessed are you Simon son of Jonah again that old name but he says you are Peter he gives him this new name on this rock after he had made that statement of faith in

Jesus as the Christ the son of God and Jesus says this was revealed to you not by flesh but by God himself and on this rock this statement this profession of faith this revelation of who God is Jesus says I will build my church and the gates of hell will not Christ is entrusting the good news of the gospel the revelation of who he is to men like Peter who he repurposes and who will pass this on to other faithful men that Christ will take an ordinary person humble them and repurpose them for his glory and so we have the charge in 2nd Timothy 4 to preach the word be urgent in season and out of season reprove rebuke and exhort with all patience teaching so men that God has repurposed they do that within a congregation they are to stand up here open up

[23 : 59] God's word and tend to the flock in this way that's the type of minister that Christ uses to feed his sheep now every believer has a part in making disciples but I think Mark Dever pointed out accurately how pastors ministering God's word that's at the core of the church's disciple ministry so it provides the food that feeds all other discipling relationships within the church as the ministry of the word through these men that God has repurposed God does this he feeds you through ministers of the word and he tends to your soul this way because your soul is a reflection of him as a shepherd and these shepherds will give account to him when he comes back him and if there's any good that comes from the ministry of the word it comes from Jesus Christ he is the one who cares for you protects you he feeds you and he heals you he does this because the condition of your soul is a reflection on

Jesus Christ himself who laid down his life for you the fifth question is what motivates a man like this to be a minister of God's word what did Christ want Peter to understand his only motivation could be Peter became a pastor of the church in Jerusalem why would Peter preach rebuke write encourage exhort and pray for the church why would he do that what's motivating him to be such an under shepherd do you love me Peter those words would keep ringing in Peter's ears and every man who God has truly called do you love me then shepherd my sheep in verse 19 the Lord Jesus prepared Peter for the kind of death he would die that glorifies God Jesus wrote and he said John wrote most certainly

I tell you when you were young you dressed yourself and walked where you wanted to but when you are old will stretch out your hands and another will dress you and carry you where you don't want to go in verse 19 we read that after Jesus said this to Peter he said follow me Peter I will give you the agape that you need I will give you this self sacrificing love that expects nothing in return you will lay down your life for me but not by your strength only because you are following me you can only do this after I have done it for you it will be my finished work worked out in your life so why would it be according to church tradition that Peter when he would be put on that cross bound up he would say

I'm not worthy to be hung like this like my Lord Jesus put me upside down it's because Christ put his love inside of Peter Peter knew what Paul knew Galatians 2 2 I have been crucified with Christ already it is no longer I who live it's no longer I who die a martyr's death as a hero but it is Christ who lives and even dies in me in the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me what is it that motivates pastors each of you are here because some minister of the word has fed you from God's word praise God for that person ordinary humbled repurposed praise God for that what motivates pastors like that to keep the congregation on the green pastors of

God's word and God's truth love for the living Jesus Christ what motivates pastors to warn to teach hard truths to try to protect Christ's lambs from the evil one it has to be love for the living Jesus

Christ what motivates pastors to pray to lose sleep over you to bear burdens with you because you belong to Christ you're his sheep and they've been set apart and they love Christ that's what motivates a minister of God's word the sixth and final question is this demand is so high do you feel that as well and we've said that Peter could only do this after he saw Christ that did it for him he's simply following Christ so what spring spring of water what spring could supply Christians with so much needed love a love for

[29 : 17] Christ my own love for Christ falls short still he needs to keep supplying me I run out I'm so finite and limited do you feel that where will this supply or this storehouse this treasury where will this come from even even Paul asked this question in 2nd Corinthians said who is sufficient for such things the answer is no one is sufficient on their own I think we get the answer in John's last reference to himself look at verse 20 after this exchange between Jesus and John Peter turned around and he saw now this is coming from the author the disciple Jesus loved remember the first time John described himself that way in this book he wants to bookend it that way he doesn't describe himself as one who loved

Christ's sheep well though he did the apostle John went on to become a pastor as an old man at the church in Ephesus it's most likely from the church in Ephesus that he wrote this gospel much later than all the others as well as his three letters in which he addresses the church as little children John does not call himself the disciple who outlived the others and though that's what they tried to make it about and there were rumors about that church history and tradition tells us that John himself was dipped in oil then burned alive but he didn't die he did outlive the other apostles and he was banished to an island of Patmos and from there the Lord gave him the great revelation the last book by an apostle in the New Testament John doesn't even describe himself as one who loved Jesus though he did in Revelation 2 4 he rebuked the church in Ephesus on behalf of Christ as having forgotten their first love you should be known by that you are ones who love Jesus John wanted to be known by that as well but that's not what he calls himself he calls himself in verse 20 the disciple whom Jesus loved John said put on my tombstone one who received love from God the Son what did you accomplish John what did you do with your life I received everything that's the answer to our question what spring supplies Christians with so much needed love now notice how John corrects the church he writes in first John 4 19 frente we love Heroes receipt right, little children. Only God can supply this much-needed love. In 1 John 4.10, he said, this is love, not that we have loved God, but that he has loved us and sent his son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. This has been a theme throughout this entire gospel. John 13.1, John wrote, having loved his own in the world, he loved them to the end. And even in Revelation, Revelation 1.5, listen how John describes the risen Jesus Christ, now glorified at the right hand of the Father. He calls him Jesus Christ, is the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, the ruler of the kings of the earth. Now listen, to him who loves us and washed us from our sins by his blood, and he made us to be a kingdom priest with God the Father. To him be all glory and power, which forever and ever. Amen. So where did John, where did Peter, where did any faithful minister, where does any Christian get such love? It comes from Christ himself. Where do you get the energy to obey even one commandment of Jesus, who rules over you as your king? Paul understood this just as well. He wrote in Colossians 1.29, that we labor, striving according to his power, which God works mightily in me. We are ones who receive. We're going to sing in a moment. You'll be invited to add your voice, declaring this truth of yourself as well. Thou my soul's shelter, thou my high tower, raise thou me heavenward, O power of my power. If I have any power, it's the power of Christ supplying me. He is the power in any power or anything that I do. Well, most likely in verse 24, it's the church of Ephesus, the strong, doctrinally sound church that was shepherded by Timothy and by John. They add their words to John. They say, we know that his witness is true. This is like the old elder in Ephesus finishing his testimony as an eyewitness before he's about to be arrested and sent away, saying, this is it. Make sure the Christians everywhere read this testimony as well. The Spirit has inspired me put it in circulation. And the church says, we receive this. Amen. Let it be scripture and canon.

Let it be passed around. This is from God. Amen means we know that this is true and we who affirm it stake our lives on it. We finished John's gospel. He said the purpose of this gospel is that you might believe. After having opened this up and he's given you his eyewitness, he's traced these glorious themes.

[35 : 30] I'm going to ask you to say amen if you receive this. Do you believe in the living Jesus Christ? Can you say with the church in Ephesus, amen? Amen. Well, your condition, beloved congregation of Jesus Christ, it reflects the chief shepherd of your soul, Jesus Christ himself. Men will fail.

Jesus Christ is the one who knows you, who cares for you. He protects you. He feeds you. He will not let go of you. If there's one last little lamb far away, he will get it, lift it up, and drag it back. Tend its wounds. Give it milk. Heal it. Restore it. Jesus Christ loves you so. He says, I will not leave you nor forsake you. I will be your good shepherd until I take you all the way home. That's how he cares for you, his sheep. Would you pray with me thanking Jesus for his great work for us? Let's pray through portions of Psalm 23.

You, O living Jesus Christ, you are our Lord and our good shepherd. We shall not want. You make us to lie down in green pastures. You lead us beside still waters. You restore our souls. You lead us in the paths of paths of righteousness for your namesake. Surely your goodness and your covenant faithfulness shall accompany us all the days of our lives until we dwell in your Father's house forever.

Those who belong to Christ, they say, Amen.