

Bible Expo Session 1

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[0 : 00] All right, let's take our Bibles to 1 Peter chapter 5, 1 Peter chapter number 5, and I'm kind of curious as to what the one Gassaway did to the other two Gassaways, not to be able to all sit at the same table there, kind of separating from, and we have a high regard for them.

We have mutual friends, friend, Tim O'Donnell, the one that has done more for me as far as my approach to preaching probably than anybody.

Tim O'Donnell, and I really appreciate who he is and your friendship to him, the respect, and then all the pastors, Pastor Staley being down, and many friends that I remember from last year.

We had a 22-year-old died in a motorcycle accident a week ago yesterday, and so it's been a very thick week and a half, and I really feel like I'm spinning and just in a flurry coming down.

If you knew my pregame rituals, I'm just a painfully, painfully deliberate, and so if it gets a little bit scattered, just bear with me as we...I want to start out in 1 Peter 5.

[1 : 15] It's a little bit of a testimony. I talked about it last year, and then I think throughout the next couple of hours, we're going to get more interactive, more hands-on. I'm going to come down, and we're going to work through some stuff.

But let's start out 1 Peter chapter number 5. Let's stand on our feet for the reading of God's Word. 1 Peter 5. The elders which are among you, verse 1, I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.

Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. Neither is being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock.

And when the chief shepherd shall appear, when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Lord, we do bow our schedules and our time, and I'm looking forward to iron sharpening iron this week as we gather our thoughts together and focus on the priority, the primacy of your word in preaching.

And Lord, we do understand that we're just under shepherds. At best, we're an associate pastor, and we look to you. The Lord Jesus Christ, our hero, is our chief shepherd.

[2 : 46] And God, do teach us and convict us and challenge us. And Lord, start with me. We'll give you the praise for all that we see, for all that we consider, and all that you do in our hearts.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. You can be seated. She was beaten, bloodied, and bruised when she ran about a half a mile from the parsonage down Lennings Lane to Franklin Square Hospital.

She'd made the trip before. It was the middle of the night. She'd made the trip before. She'd done it, in fact, many times. But this is the first time when she got there, the police were waiting for her.

The police wouldn't let her go from that hospital room. They took her to the courthouse. And the unraveling began when the pastor's wife filed an ex parte against the former pastor of Rosedale Baptist Church.

Come to find out, it had been going on for a while. She, in retrospect, the church says they should have seen by the way she combed her hair down and dark glasses at times, missing at times from church.

[3 : 51] All of the telltale signs of spousal abuse. And the way that it came to light is one of the deacon's daughters worked at the courthouse and had a secretary come. She'd been inviting people, handing out tracts and flyers, boy, big day coming up, and want you to come out for this big friend day.

And obviously the pastor's picture and the pastor's wife's picture. And she came running in saying, Jewel, you need to see this. I hate to tell you this, but I think your pastor's wife is out here.

As she filed an ex parte, a restraining order on him. And of course, the unraveling began as it came to light, the fact that he'd been beating his wife. By the time the dust settled, the spousal abuse cycle had also settled in because she was blaming herself.

It's my fault. You know, I was immoral at one time. My fault that he beats me. And of course, he was being immoral currently with the secretary, now married to the secretary. He sought counseling and even got kind of a clean bill of health.

But the deacons, the leadership of the church realized that, no, no, not only is it not where it should be, it is terribly wrong in what should be.

[5 : 06] The first Sunday of 1997 is what they call Terrible Sunday. At least the group that was, that is, and most of them we've retained, the group that's there now that was there then.

What happened that Sunday morning was 24 of the leaders, Sunday school teachers, deacons of the church met the pastor that Sunday morning as the pastor was coming out to preach that Sunday morning.

The pastor was tipped off by that confrontation that was going to take place on a Sunday morning church. And so the pastor got a plainclothes police officer to come with him.

And what ensued was about two and a half hours of name calling and yelling. And the pastor's wife, you can hear on tape saying, you've always wanted my husband, yelling at another lady in the church.

And one of the ladies, the wives of one of the men that were up on the platform standing against, and in retrospect, it wasn't done the right way, but it needed to be done in retrospect, said, you beat me far worse than he ever beat his wife.

[6 : 07] And I mean, the whole Sunday morning service was just airing out dirty laundry and the mess and just all the horror and just anything you could think of.

The first thing I did when I took the church is I got all of those tapes together. I locked them up. I pretty much shut them down. But understand, the church went through some horrific events.

The church, when I got there, there was another lady that had been beaten and abused. Not physically, not physically, but spiritually.

And it's not a lady, it's the bride of Christ. The church had been abused and beaten and just on a regular basis, manipulative, oppressed.

But when I got there, there was another lady that was going through that same spousal abuse cycle. One of the first things we did was, when we were able to get our feet under us, what had happened, they were in the middle of an auditorium build.

[7 : 19] They had run out of money. The workers walked off and now the pastor is out of the church. They were a week away from receivership. Church about to close down. About \$30-some thousand dollars in just electric bills, phone bills, let alone the building payment that had gone unpaid.

The church was in duress. Duress. Financial duress. In fact, we weren't bringing enough money even to pay the building payment, let alone to pay a salary. They ended up having the secretary resign.

The only position that they were paying during that five months without a pastor, the only position they had the secretary resign. When I came, my wife and I, my wife was a full-time secretary.

It was \$25,000. My wife says she was worth \$24,000. So anyway, for me. But \$25,000. That kind of duress. That kind of, one of the first things we did was the missionaries that had gone unpaid for a year and a half.

Once we got our feet under us, we wrote checks for \$30-some thousand dollars in back support of missionaries that had gone unpaid. I think that's one of the reasons that God blessed like he did.

[8 : 28] But when I got to town, it was a church that had been beaten, that had been abused. Some of the problems in the church, the head deacon who wanted to get the pastorate, he didn't want to give up his GM job, but wanted the pastor, wanted to get the pay there, pay here.

He ended up sitting on the front pew of the church service. I don't know if any of you other pastors have ever had deacon problems. But he would, while I'm preaching, would just be flipping through his Bible and just not even paying attention.

And then when I would say something that he didn't agree with, you know, and I mean, just people afterwards would say, pastor, what's the matter with this guy? And the head deacon treasurer of the church, it wasn't one of those ideal opportunities that you would be looking for.

When we came in on May 25th, there was 122 people. I ended up getting the church vote 97 to 2, 97 for, two against.

I've identified 14 of those two no votes. But anyway, 97 to 2, and the question that had to, if you're a pastor, you'll get it. But the question was, how do you rebuild a broken ministry?

[9 : 38] A ministry that was just almost DOA, how do you rebuild a broken ministry? Put down point number one. I needed to, number one, rebuild my view of the sheep.

Boy, I needed to rebuild my view of the sheep. Boy, this is a group of people that had been beaten and abused and verbally berated. Look at verse number two. Verse one.

The elders which are among you I exhort, who also am an elder, and witness to the sufferings of Christ. Christ also partaker of the glory shall be revealed. First phrase, feed the flock. The flock. Feed the flock of God which is among you.

Taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly. Boy, focus first and foremost on the sheep. Boy, the sheep are the focus of the shepherd. Boy, the sheep. The sheep are the focal point.

Boy, they're the main focus of the shepherd. The sheep are. And the first thing I had to realize was the buildings aren't the ministry. The budget isn't the ministry. The programs aren't the ministry. Boy, my schedule, that is not the ministry.

[10 : 40] Boy, the ministry are the people. It's the flock. Feed the flock of God which is among you. Boy, I need to make sure that I walk slowly among the crowd.

Boy, touching and blessing and reaching out and uplifting. I need to make sure that my focus was on the sheep. People are the ministry.

I told you last year about the book that I have in my library. I now cannot find it. I don't know where it's at. But the title of it is They Smell Like Sheep. And when I got the book, it was kind of, you know, I can't believe that someone would write a book, How Sheep Smell Like Sheep.

But the concept was the shepherd has spent so much time with the sheep, loving on the sheep. Boy, living among the sheep, spending time with the sheep, uplifting the sheep, caring for the sheep, running his hand through the wool of the sheep, taking out all the burrs and all of the, all of the, anointing the oil of the head of the sheep.

Boy, the shepherd spends so much time with the sheep that the shepherd starts to smell like the sheep. And we need to realize that, that, that, that we don't present ourselves piously above them or, or, or behind them, driving them.

[11 : 50] Feed the flock of God, which is among you, among you. Boy, we need to make sure we're spending time loving and blessing and helping, calling them, leaving messages for them.

Um, we came home early when we got the news about the 22-year-old that had passed away. Uh, and from the airport, we went straight to the house and spent about two and a half hours there at the house, just trying to, you know, it's a tragic, tragic event.

There's no words to say. And, no matter what you try to say, they're still without a 22-year-old that died of a motorcycle accident. They're still without a 22-year-old. Uh, I can spin and quote a verse and, and say this, and, and it doesn't matter what you say, but, but just being there and loving on the sheep, being a blessing to the sheep, trying to be a help, trying to uplift.

Boy, I need to make sure that my focus, always my focus are the sheep. I started, and on the way to the airport today, I stopped by his shop.

He, uh, owns a plumbing supply store, and, uh, every morning, uh, I go by his plumbing supply store early in the morning, bring a Diet Pepsi, his favorite drink, um, and I'll either pray with him if he's there, and if he's not there, I'll leave that, that Diet Pepsi on, on, on, on the doorstep of the shop, uh, and I'll text him, hey, sitting outside of your shop praying for you.

[13 : 14] Uh, praying that God will give you strength, that you'll do a little bit better today than you did yesterday, that you'll be able to focus a little bit more today. Uh, I have a 20-year-old. It, it tears me up thinking about, um, Carl Stilwell losing his 22-year-old son.

Um, and I, I hope that if I ever get to the point where I'm dispassionate about the people that God's given me to love, to bless, boy, number one, if I'm going to rebuild a broken ministry, I need to make sure that, that I have a love, a heart for people.

There was a guy in college that, that would say, um, uh, I feel like God's called me to pastor, the only problem is I don't like people, I don't have any, well, that's a problem, and if you don't like people, boy, sheep are the ministry, sheep are the focus of the shepherd, uh, and we need to make sure that we don't get so busy with our day timer, and our, our, the way we dress, and how we present, and, and, and, and our, uh, presentation, that, that we miss the fact that our job is to, to run, and to lift up, and to bless, and to, to carry, uh, and to spend time hanging out with.

Uh, they say that shepherds will walk side by side with their, their staff on the back of a sheep, and it's almost like walking hand in hand with a person. It'll, it'll give comfort to, comfort to.

Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me. Yeah. Yeah. They'll, uh, anoint the sheep head with oil to get the mites, and the, and the ticks, and, and all of the seeds away. Uh, they'll, they'll call each sheep by name.

[14 : 43] Uh, they'll know the sheep by the different imperfections. Maybe it's a cut ear, or a limp, or, uh, a scarred, and, uh, they'll be able to call them by name. They'll be able to identify each one of them, uh, by the imperfections they have.

Hey, number one, we need to make sure that we rebuild our view of the sheep. Isaiah says, The Lord shall feed his flock like a shepherd, shall gather the lambs with his arm, shall carry them in his bosom, shall gently lead those that are with young.

Well, I love the fact that, uh, Aaron, the high priest, boy, on that, those, those, uh, stones that, that, that ephod, boy, on his chest would have engraved in there the twelve tribes on his chest.

In fact, Exodus says, Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel and the breastplate of judgment upon his heart. Um, love them, call them, send notes to them, hang out with them, spend time with them, invite them over.

Uh, in fact, I think that's what, what it means when the Bible says we're to be given to, to hospitality. Uh, and didn't the Lord Jesus Christ model that for us when, when, when the word was made flesh and dwelt among us?

[15 : 58] Feed the flock of God which is among you? Boy, the fact that he was willing the highest to come the lowest to be a blessing to us, boy, that's our chief shepherd. Uh, and number one, we need to rebuild our view of the sheep.

Um, it's not, it's not, it's not, uh, if we're not loving the sheep, we're not leading like a shepherd. Uh, if we're not loving the sheep and blessing the sheep and uplifting the sheep, boy, Peter, who was around that fire, remember after he denied the Lord and the Lord said, lovest thou me, lovest thou me, uh, uh, and he said, you know that I love you, feed my sheep, feed my lamb, feed my sheep.

Boy, it's all about the sheep, it's all about loving, it's all about blessing. Uh, and then Peter turns to us and he said, boy, make sure, make sure you have a love for the sheep, a love for the people.

Boy, make sure you love them and bless them. Boy, we can get so caught up in building buildings and building, uh, staffs and building churches that, that, that, that, look at verse two.

Uh, feed the flock of God, which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not a filthy lucre, but of a ready mind, neither as being lords over God's heritage.

[17 : 12] Boy, we shouldn't be lords over, you want to cross-reference that, second Corinthians, Paul said, not that I want to have dominion over your faith, I just want to be a helper of your joy.

Boy, as soon as I get that, that personality of dominating and, and dictating, uh, I, I've lost the fact that, that I'm to be a shepherd that's loving and leading, loving and leading, that's blessing, that's uplifting, that's encouraging.

Um, Ezekiel 34, 2, should not the shepherds feed the flock? Ye eat the fat, ye clothe you with wool, ye kill them that are fed, ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed the sick, neither have ye bound up the broken, neither have ye brought again that which is driven away.

Neither have ye sought that which is lost, but with force and with cruelty, ye have ruled them. Uh, what's interesting to me is, if you've ever tracked it, some churches that just have that dictator at the top, boy, a lot of times they're growing.

And, and for a while I would scratch my head until I read that verse where the Bible says, the prophets prophesy falsely and the priests bear rule by their own means, and my people love to have it so.

[18 : 24] Boy, it attracts a carnal crowd, it attracts a carnal congregation, but, but understand, boy, when it's all about the fighting and the oppressing and the dictating, boy, you're going to end up instilling in those sheep that, that, that, that carnal, cutting, cantankerous.

Boy, I want to have the, the relationships at Rosedale Baptist so cushioned with grace and with mercy and with love. Boy, I want to make deposits in those people and, and, and bless them with love.

Because eventually I'm going to need that reciprocated to me. Is anybody with me on that? And if you're a perfect pastor, you won't have to worry about it, but, but I've, I've blown it as a pastor. Anybody here ever blown it as a pastor?

I've, I've blown it. Uh, I've, uh, served the Lord's supper backwards. Anybody in here besides me do that? And, and I mean, you're in a quandary when they already have the juice and you're reading the verses.

He gave the body broken and, and, and, um, uh, I've blown it as a pastor when Rich and Gina Baker sat on the back row and they brought their, their, their, uh, newborn into the service.

[19 : 28] Uh, and I'm thinking, why would Rich and Gina Baker do that? We, we do parent baby dedication. Anyone know what those are? You bring them up, you, you kiss the baby, you come back. And it's a pray for them. And, um, and, and, and Rich and Gina, it was, it was a Sunday morning.

And I'm thinking in my mind as I'm, as I'm going through the service, I can't, can't believe why would they have that? They never bring, I don't understand that. And then, uh, they had family members coming in, sitting by them all around. And I'm going, wow, that's neat.

They have visitors coming. Praise the Lord. And, and, and, you know, I was just, you know, really getting it at that point. And, and, uh, it didn't dawn on me till I had dismissed in prayer. Uh, and my secretary ran up and said, Pastor, Rich and Gina were supposed to have their, their baby dedicated this morning.

I, I literally, my heart was bleeding at that point. Uh, Rich, I'm sorry. And I'm sorry.

And, and Rich said, Pastor, don't worry about it. Don't worry. Yeah, but you had family from out of town. You had people visiting. Hey, Pastor, don't worry about it. I know that you love my family. I have no doubt that you love my family.

[20 : 34] Listen, number one, we need to rebuild our view of the sheep. And that'll bring us to number two. Automatically, that'll cause them to rebuild their view of the shepherd.

Boy, when I'm loving them and blessing them and encouraging them and uplifting them and spending time with them. Boy, they're not going to see that, that butcher coming their way.

Uh, they're going to see a shepherd, a shepherd that loves a pastor. Boy, they're going to see a man of God that has a heart of God, uh, that has the love of God for them. Boy, when, when we're rebuilding our view of the sheep automatically, um, uh, that'll rebuild their view of the shepherd.

Feed the flock of God, which is among you. Among you. Now, Rosedale Baptist, for years, um, uh, they saw someone that was dictating and dominating.

And when the hard times came, the hireling fleeth because he careth not for the sheep. Boy, he's in it for what he can get out of it. Uh, the hireling, he's in it for the hire. He's in it for the paycheck. He's in it for what he can get out of it.

[21 : 38] Uh, the shepherd is, is in it for what he can put into it. To be a blessing to them. Uh, look at verse number, verse number two. Verse number two. Feed the flock of God, which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly.

Say the next phrase. Not for filthy lucre. Uh, say it with me as if your paycheck didn't depend. Okay, look at it. Not for filthy lucre.

Now, I didn't have a problem with this part because the church had no money. When I came to the church, um, they knew I wasn't in it for what I could get out of it. Um, we, uh, ended up on a conference call to the, to the deacon board as they, uh, kind of did a pre-screening of me.

And then, uh, when I was to candidate at the church, I bought my own plane ticket to go candidate at the church. Uh, when the church called me to be their, be their pastor, I paid for the U-Haul to load up our stuff and take it to the church.

Um, when, when, when I got there, uh, we didn't have a parsonage. The, the pastor, the hireling, uh, ended up, saw the incoming. And so he had the parsonage signed over to him. Uh, the pastor, uh, former pastor, uh, ended up living in the parsonage on the church property for three years while I lived in the basement of a church member's house.

[23 : 01] Me, my wife, and my two kids for the first three years I was there. Uh, I, I didn't have any problems showing them my heart and showing them my willing to sacrifice. Well, all they had to do was to, to, to, to, to look.

Um, I remember when we got there, that auditorium that was, um, half built, builders walked off. Uh, they needed about \$10,000, \$15,000 to get pews and carpet.

Uh, my wife and I, we sold a house in California. I had a little bit of money, not much money, about \$7,000. Um, we, we closed out the account. Um, \$6,500, \$6,000, \$6,500, something like that.

I told the, the fellow that was doing the offering, hey, tell the church as you're, you're, you're trying to raise the \$10,000. Hey, tell them that someone is giving the first \$6,500. Uh, don't tell them who it is, but just tell them, uh, someone is giving, uh, we closed out the account, uh, and, uh, the \$6,500.

Uh, I'll never forget, and, and the money came in pretty quickly after that. Uh, I'll never forget the ride home that afternoon when my wife said, isn't that neat that someone gave \$6,500, uh, towards the carpet?

[24 : 02] And I said, well, uh, uh, yeah, that's neat. And, uh, she said, uh, do you know who it is? I said, yeah, I know who it is. And, uh, is it someone new or are they an older member? No, they're, it's us!

We're the ones! Um, but, uh, it's, it's, listen, as you're pouring in, pouring in, pouring in, pouring in, you're not doing it to get back. Love gives, not in order to get back, love gives for giving's sake.

But understand, it's going to be reciprocated. That love, hey, we love Him because He first loved us. And as you invest and bless and love, as you're rebuilding your view of the sheep, uplifting them and befriending them.

Uh, someone said that, that people aren't looking for a friendly church, they're looking for friends. And I believe that. Uh, we can all polish the nameplate and get all the order of service down and, and put on that smile.

But at the end of the day, they're not looking for a friendly church, they're looking for someone who truly loves them. But who's going to go out of their way for them and be a blessing to them. Uh, uh, we need to make sure, rebuild your view of the sheep.

[25 : 11] And automatically, that'll cause them to rebuild their view of the shepherd. Uh, uh, look at verse number three. Verse three. Neither is being lords over God's heritage, but being, say the next word, in samples.

In samples. Being examples to the flock. Uh, as you rebuild your view of the sheep, it'll automatically cause them to rebuild their view of the shepherd.

It really does remind me of Moses in the wilderness. Remember Moses in the wilderness in Numbers when, when he was supposed to speak to the rock? Remember that? Uh, and instead of speaking to the rock, anybody remember what he did that second time?

He ended up smiting the rock. Uh, he took, I always wondered when he smote the rock, I always wondered whether those blooms and blossoms and buds, those flowers, I wonder whether they fell to the ground.

You know the ones I'm talking about, right? Uh, three chapters prior, in my opinion, Moses' staff is the same as Aaron's rod. Uh, Aaron's rod, one of the twelve rods, when they said, we be holy like you're holy, you take too much upon you.

[26 : 13] Uh, well, okay, let's just go ahead in the tribes, put one staff, one rod per tribe, door of the tabernacle, the one that blooms, blossoms, and bears fruit, almond buds. Boy, that's the one that I've called. Uh, and of course we know that it was Aaron's rod, it was Moses' staff that did that.

And so, now from then on, all of Israel would know when Moses held that staff up to move forward, they wouldn't have to wonder who God's man was. They wouldn't, it was God's authentication, it was God's verification, it was God's certification, that, that, that Moses is the one that I've called.

Um, now, uh, when he lost his view of who the sheep were, remember? Got a little impatient with him, got a little testy with him, got a little curt with him, got a little short with him.

Remember when he said, oh, ye rebels! Anybody remember that? Boy, he lost track. He, he wasn't rebuilding his view of the sheep, he lost his view of the sheep. By the way, if you want to take it back even a step, it was his pride that caused that when he said, must we, really, fetch you water?

Moses, you really think you have anything to do with it? You, you really think you've added to it? Uh, and so, he lost his view of the sheep. Rebels, he struck out of the sheep, and automatically he struck out at the, the rock.

[27 : 26] By the way, Corinthians says, the rock that followed them is Christ. When you've done it unto one of the least of these rebels, you've done it unto me.

Striking out at people, well, you strike out of the Lord Jesus Christ. Uh, Saul, Saul, why persecute us out me? Now, wait a second. I'm not persecuting you. I'm persecuting the Christians.

Uh, yeah, but when you're striking out at the sheep, you're striking out at the Lord Jesus Christ. Listen. Before that, when he lifted up his rod, his staff, when he had the right view of the sheep, they had the right view of the shepherd.

But now that he's striking out at the sheep, boy, he, he lost his view of the sheep. Boy, I kind of wonder if those buds and blossoms and almond, those, those flowers fell to the ground.

And now the next time he holds that up, boy, it's not blossoms and buds anymore. It's, it's not any different than anybody else's staff.

[28 : 24] It's just the same as all of those other rods. Boy, there's no authentication, no certification. You see, when he lost his view of the sheep, boy, they ended up losing their view of the shepherd.

Does anybody see the tie there, the connection? By the way, uh, how do people know whether we're being used by the Spirit of God, whether we've been called out by the Spirit of God or not? One of the ways, in my opinion, is the fruit of the Spirit.

The fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, kindness, temperance. Um, I, I missed some, didn't I? Did I get them wrong? And I'm working on it, but, uh, the fruit of the Spirit. Uh, as you're called by the Spirit of God and you're ministering the fruit, the, the, the power of the Holy Spirit, boy, they're gonna, they're gonna, they're gonna, that's why the Bible says a bishop must not be soon angry.

Rebels! Not a striker. Striking out at the rock. Does anybody see that? And you say, well, Pat, isn't that a stretch? Well, you remember what disqualified Moses from going to the promised land, right?

Do you remember what it was? It was that right there. Right there. Must weep at you, water. Rebels, striking out. Boy, when he struck out at people, he struck out at the Lord Jesus Christ, Christ, and he absolutely struck out in the ministry.

[29 : 39] I don't know about you, but, uh, I'm hoping that I don't strike out in the ministry, but there's times where I've, I've gotten a few strikes. Is anybody with me where, where it's just a little shorter than I should have been? A little quicker than I should have been?

Uh, walking through a crowd and someone wanted to talk to me and just, man, I, I just, you know, I don't, I don't, well, I, I hope, though, that, that, that my, my centeredness, I hope I never lose track that, that the sheep, the sheep, the sheep, the sheep are the focus of the shepherd.

Boy, rebuild your view of the sheep, and in turn, that'll cause them to rebuild their view of the shepherd. And listen, that's when number three, write it down, uh, when, when you're loving them and blessing them and uplifting and encouraging them and helping them, uh, those, those sheep that have put up walls, they've been scarred, they're not going to let anybody in, I've been hurt before, and, boy, the last pastor did this, and, boy, I'm not going to let you on the inside.

Boy, when you rebuild your view of the sheep, those walls start to come down. When you love them and encourage them and bless them. And when those walls come down and their hearts open up, that's when number three, we rebuild our use of the scriptures.

You rebuild your view of the sheep, loving and blessing, uplifting, encouraging, and that, in turn, causes them to rebuild their view of the shepherd. And that's when the hearts open up and there's good soil.

[31 : 03] It's not stony ground or thorn-choked-out ground or shallow ground. It's going to be good ground at that point. You can plant the word of God. Look at verse number two, the first three words.

Say it with me. Feed the flock of God. Feed the flock of God. Feed the flock of God.

My question is, what do you feed the flock of God with? Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Father. Feed the flock of God with the word of God.

Turn to Acts chapter 20 quickly. Acts chapter 20. Acts chapter 20. It's not every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the preacher. It's every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Father.

We'll use that verse for the preservation of the Bible. I believe in an every word Bible. We live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Father. But understand, it's talking more about the presentation of the Bible.

[32 : 05] It's not just that we believe every word. It's that we need to be teaching and preaching and getting out every word of God to the people. Look at Acts chapter 20. Look at verse number 28. It's not my opinions or my illustrations.

It's the word of God. Look at 28. Take heed therefore unto yourselves. Rebuild their view of the shepherd. And to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost made your overseers.

Rebuild your view of the sheep. To feed the church of God. Rebuild your use of the scriptures. Same chapter. Look at verse number 32. And now brethren, I commend you to God and to the, say it, the word of his grace, which is able to build you up.

It's the word of God that you feed the flock of God with. Look at verse 27. It's the word of God. The word of God. 27. For I have not shunned to declare unto you, say it with me, all the counsel of God.

Boy, Paul would say, I gave you the whole counsel of God. I gave you the entire complete counsel of God. In fact, look at verse number 20. I kept back nothing that was, say the word, profitable unto you, but have showed you and taught you.

[33 : 17] All that's profitable. I gave you every single thing that was profitable. Okay. My question is this. What's profitable? Does anybody know what's profitable?

Turn in your Bibles to 2 Timothy chapter number 3. All scripture is given by inspiration of God. All scripture, by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Father, the whole counsel of God.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable. And so Paul's basically saying, I gave you everything that's profitable. I gave you the whole counsel of God.

I gave you the word of his grace that's able to build us up and understand, rebuild you for the sheep. They've rebuilt their view of the shepherd. That's when we rebuild our use of the scriptures.

How many people are new? You've never heard me. You've never seen me. This is the first time you've been introduced. Raise your hands. Okay. I apologize to the rest. We've heard this, but don't miss this. Look at 2 Timothy chapter 4.

[34 : 17] Look at verse number 2. 2 Timothy chapter 4. It's the next chapter. Verse number 2. Say the first three words with me, if you will. Everybody say them with me. You ready? Preach the word.

Say it again. Preach the word. You know, for years, Bible college and I even read it. For some reason, I had a paradigm where I would read that phrase, preach the word.

That's how I'd read that. Boy, I would think it was all about the intensity of the tone. All about the volume of the voice. All about the dynamics of the delivery of the voice. All about the preach. Preach. It's all about the preach.

Boy, I thought that's what the emphasis was in that text. But I didn't have the context of that text. Boy, they didn't have a problem with preaching back then.

They were preaching everything under the sun. Gnosticism. They were preaching Judaism. They were preaching legalism. Boy, they were preaching. Boy, it wasn't. They're preaching.

[35 : 18] It's, it's, it's. Listen. The reason I missed it is because the chapter break. It's not preach the word as an afterthought. It's preach the word.

Boy, the context of that verse is it's the word of God. The word of God. It's all about the word of God. You want me to prove it? Look four verses prior to it.

Four verses prior to it. You miss it because the chapter break. Or at least I did for years. I missed it. Verse number 16 of chapter 3. It says all scripture.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable. All scripture is profitable for doctrine or proof, correction, instruction, and righteousness. All scripture is profitable for that. Next verse.

Verse number 16 of chapter 3. Verse number 16 of chapter 3. Verse number 16 of chapter 3. Verse number 16 of chapter 3. Verse number 16 of chapter 3. Am I close? All scripture is what causes that. All scripture is profitable for that. What's the next verse?

[36 : 13] I charge thee therefore. Because all scripture is profitable. Because it's profitable for doctrine or proof. Because that's what we're perfected with. That's what we're thoroughly furnished with. I charge thee therefore.

In the sight of, in the sight of God. In the Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall judge the quick and the dead. I'm mixing that up. At his kingdom and his appearing. Who shall judge the quick and the dead. I charge thee therefore.

Will someone read that for me? I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall judge the quick and the dead. At his appearing and his kingdom.

Because of all of that. We're supposed to preach the word. Well that's the emphasis. That's the context of it. The preach has nothing to do.

You know. Okay it's there. It's there. Communicate the word. Teach the word. Speak the word. Make sure it's the word. Make sure you're getting the word out. Make sure it's about the word. But it's the word. Boy that's where the emphasis is. You want me to prove it?

[37 : 11] Look at verse 2. Preach the word. Be instant. In season. Out of season. Reprove, rebuke. Reprove, rebuke. Exhort with all long suffering. And what's the next word? And doctrine.

Okay. Is it the preach that gives doctrine? The intensity of my tone? Volume of my voice? Dynamics of my delivery? Is that what gives doctrine? Or is it the word that gives doctrine?

Look at verse 16. All scripture is given by inspiration of God. And is profitable for, wait a second. For doctrine. Look at verse 2 again. Preach the word.

Be instant. In season. Out of season. What's that next word? Reprove. Reprove. Right up here. Is it the intensity of my tone that reproves? Is it the volume of my voice that reproves?

Is it the dynamics of my delivery? Or is it the word of God that reproves? Look at verse 16 again. All scripture is given by inspiration of God. And is profitable for doctrine.

[38 : 09] For reproof. You know the problem comes when I'm trying to reprove someone. Reprove someone. Reprove someone. If you're not using the word of God.

You're not reproving them. You're just fussing at them. You're just harassing them. You're just oppressing and intimidating them. And if I can just say it louder. And if I can just say it bigger.

And if I can just be more dogmatic about it. No, wait a second. The Bible is our final authority for faith and practice. It's not how loud the preacher is.

That's not our final authority. It's the word of God that's our final authority. Well, wait a second. The Lord Jesus Christ. He spake as one having authority. You really think that means that he was screaming at the top of his lungs?

That's the authority? You really think that? Or do you think that it may be that every word that he spoke was the word of God? Boy, that's the authority. And so the thing I had to do is, number one, I had to rebuild my view of the sheep.

[39 : 10] Bless them, love them, help them. And it's one of those, it's one of those, you ever go boating? You usually, if you're out in the middle of the water, the Chesapeake Bay, if you lose track of two points, the point behind you and the point in front of you, boy, if you're not able to keep track of those two points, you may end up drifting to who knows where.

If you lose track of those points. Hey, one of the points in ministry to make sure that I don't drift so that I don't lose heart in ministry is I need to make sure that I'm always rebuilding my view of the sheep.

Boy, the sheep are the ministry. And in turn, they'll rebuild their view of the shepherd. And once that happens, they open up their heart.

Once they open up their heart, I'm able to plant the word of God in their heart. And that's when the word of God blooms and blesses and bears fruit in their life.

Does everybody believe this? Yes or no? Turn to Luke chapter 4 quickly and we're done. Luke chapter 4. Luke chapter 4. Look at Luke chapter 4.

[40 : 20] You know, we make such a big deal about, well, preaching, doesn't that mean, you know, and we go to the Greek word and we say it means to proclaim with authority or it means you're supposed to, you know.

And I'm all for those different words, teaching, exhorting, comforting, all the words that God uses to describe how we get the word of God out. But understand, I think we overemphasize those words at the expense of the word of God.

Look at Luke chapter 4. Look at verse number 14. And Jesus returned to the power of the Spirit into Galilee and there went out a fame of him through all regions round about. And he, what's that next word?

He, what he taught. Say it with me. And he taught. He taught in their synagogues being glorified of all. And he came to Nazareth where he had been brought up. By the way, the greatest sermon of all time, the Sermon on the Mount, he didn't stand up and preach at them.

If you look at it, the Bible says when he was set down, he taught them. And I'm not saying, you know, I'm all for loud preaching and dynamic preaching. And as long as it's the word of God that's being preached.

[41 : 33] I'm all for quiet, monotone preaching. As long as it's the word of God being preached. And understand, hey, if there's no word of God that's getting out, you know, why are we wasting our time?

Boy, it's the word of God that ministries are built by. The church is the pillar and ground of the truth. Look at it, verse number 16. He's teaching. He's teaching. And he came to Nazareth as he had been brought up.

And as his custom was, teaching. He was teaching. As his custom was, went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up for it to read. And there were delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah.

And when he had opened the book, he's reading. He's teaching. He's opening the word. He found the place where it is written. Verse 18 and 19. He quotes Isaiah 61, verse 1 and 2. Look at verse number 20.

And he closed the book, gave it again to the minister, and sat down. The eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And when he began to say, teaching, reading, he's opening, he's saying, This day the scripture is fulfilled in your ears.

[42 : 32] And all bear witness, wonder, to the gracious words which proceed out of his mouth. Gracious words. Verse 25, he gives a Bible illustration of the widow of Zarephath, 1 Kings 17. Verse 27, he gives a biblical illustration of the name of the leper, 2 Kings 5.

And so, so far, boy, what he's doing is he's teaching. He's teaching. In fact, look at it again. Verse 15. And he taught. Look at verse number 31.

And he came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the Sabbath days. And they were astonished at his doctrine, for his word was of power. He's teaching. He's teaching. Look at verse 43.

And he said unto them, I must. What's that word? Now, wait a second. Isn't that a contradiction? Look at it. I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also, just like I preached the word of God to these cities that I just left.

Is anybody seeing that? And so, if the Holy Spirit of God says that what he did, same event. The Holy Spirit of God says he was teaching. He was saying. He was teaching. He was teaching.

[43 : 37] And then the Lord Jesus Christ, in describing it, says, I must preach. Same event. Just like I preach in other cities also. Just like back then. My question is this. Which one was right?

Was the Holy Spirit of God when the Holy Spirit said he was teaching the word? Or was the Lord Jesus Christ right when he said he was preaching the word? Am I belaboring the point a little bit?

Maybe. But understand, both of them were right. Because the big deal is not, what's the decibel level? What's the intensity of the tongue? The volume of the voice.

Hey, that's not the big deal. Is it teaching? Or exhorting? Or comforting? Or speaking? Or whatever you want to call it. Communicating? Boy, the big deal is it, is it, is it the word of God that's being given?

Listen. Terrible Sunday was a terrible time. And there was a whole lot of people that ended up hurt and scarred.

[44 : 38] I remember one of the ladies that came in after about the second month. And she said, we feel like the Israelites that have been let out of bondage of Egypt. But anyway. It was a whole cycle of loving, loving, loving, loving, loving them.

Boy, and in turn, those scars, those walls would be lowered. Boy, they started to have a respect. They'd listen. They'd give me an ear. He that hath an ear, let him hear.

Let him hear. Boy, implying that some that do have ears do not hear. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit said to the churches. And they let down those walls. They started to rebuild their view of the shepherd.

And that's when, boy, that's when the dynamic change started to happen in people's lives. The help. The word of God finding good soil. It was the same sower in the parable. It was the same seed in the parable.

But it was different soils in the parable. And by the way, it doesn't even give us very much descriptive language in describing, boy, was the sower a camp meeting sower?

[45 : 46] Is that how he sowed? Did he sow in a camp meeting style? Or was he more of a lecture sower? Was he more of a deliberate, systematic sower? Is that the way he sowed? Or was he more of a revivalist kind of a sower?

Or was he more of a maybe a... How did he sow? Is anybody following this at all? You know, how he sowed sidearm, overhand?

Was it a finger roll? You know, it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. It was the same sower. It was the same seed. Indeed, listen, it's not about your style as much as the substance needs to be the Bible.

Boy, let's make sure that... And by the way, the church, it really was a mess. But we were going to start a church anyway. And so when I went there, I assumed we were going to lose everything, buildings and everything, and have to start over.

But I'd have a handful of people to go across the street, start over with. And it was a mess. Terrible Sunday. Terrible Sunday. By the way, the same day they were having terrible Sunday out there, the first Sunday of 1997, I didn't know about the church, but God had been stirring me to pastor, stirring me.

[47 : 01] He had called me to pastor. I hid for 14 years. The same Sunday they were having their terrible Sunday, I went in to talk to my pastor. I was an assistant pastor in Southern California. And as the assistant pastor, I had a large Sunday school class.

It was profitable to the church. The pastor was livid that I would even consider pastoring somewhere, even think about pastoring somewhere. And I'm passive.

You know, pastor, whatever you want, however you want it. I just know that God called me to pastor. If you want it to be two years from now, if you want me to... Whenever it is, Pastor, I'm... And the pastor just irate said, you're disloyal.

And I said, well, pastor, how am I disloyal? And he said, you're disloyal. I've never criticized you. I've never, I've never, I've always pointed people to you.

You're disloyal because you say you're called to pastor, and I say you're not called to pastor. You're disloyal. And he went on to say, I'm going to close every door in fundamentalism to you.

[48 : 03] It was a traumatic time for me. I had to decide whether I was going to worry about doors that he could open or he could shut, or whether I was going to trust in the one that opens doors that no man can shut, shuts doors that no man can open.

But I say all of that to say, I've been in abusive churches before. And I think God allowed me to go through three years of just, it was hard.

It was hard. For the next three months, he'd have, I was still staff on the platform. Everyone in there knew who he was preaching at as he ripped and snorted and threw and kicked.

I'd have people come up afterwards saying, hey, Brother Scott, I don't know how you sit through this. And that's his church. It's his church. You know, he's the pastor of the church. And that's no problem.

He's the pastor. But it was that kind of an abusive, God prepared me to go into another broken ministry to love the people. To love the people.

[49 : 02] By the way, most aren't going to take a broken ministry like that. But whatever ministry you have, you're going to have broken people this Sunday morning. This Sunday morning, you're going to have someone that's gone through a divorce.

Someone that's had just a, you know, the unthinkable happen. Carl losing his 22-year-old son. The, the, we need to rebuild our view of the sheep.

Love the people. In order that, well, not even in order, but in turn, they will rebuild their view of the shepherd. And that, by the way, I think that's what the two great commandments are, isn't it?

Master, what is the great commandment of the law? The first great commandment of the law is this. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength. Boy, the Bible's a part of that.

The Bible's a part of that. The second is like in the first. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments, hang all the law and the prophets. Boy, I know a whole lot of preachers that they have the law and the prophets down to a T.

[50 : 05] But they struggle with the first and they struggle with the second. And if you don't have those two, all the law and the prophets that are to hang on these two commandments, hang all the law and the prophets.

If you don't have those two, boy, everything else falls to the ground. Lord, I do pray that, um, I, I, I thank you that you've blessed, that you've, uh, grown your church, that, uh, you've shown yourself strong.

Lord, it's your church. You're doing a great job with it. Lord, I just pray that, um, as we, uh, get oriented a little bit this first session, that, um, that, that you, that you will highlight in our minds the, the priority, the value that you place on the sheep.

Uh, just think about how you're willing to leave the 99 in the wilderness and go after that one lost sheep. Pick them up, carry them, carry them, place them on your shoulders.

Well, I think about Isaiah where it says about your son, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, singular. But for that one sheep, boy, you put both shoulders into it, on his shoulders.

[51 : 19] God, thank you for that love. I do pray that, that you'll help us to love your people with that kind of a love. Uh, bless our, our time today and tomorrow. We'll give you the praise in Jesus name. Amen.