

Jesus Is the Good Shepherd

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alpharetta, Georgia. This is the next message in our series on the book of John entitled, Jesus is God.

That song is the same story, isn't it? About how he died for us, how he paid the debt. What a wonderful, wonderful Savior. Take your Bible, open it if you would to John chapter 10.

John chapter 10 and we're going to worship him by looking at who he is and what the Bible says about him. I hope that before you go home tonight you'll be just more in love with Jesus and more in love with what he has done and what he's doing.

And the work that he is committing all over the world. And read with me if you would John chapter 10 verses 1 and we'll read down through verse 21. Take your ink pen if you have your Bible and maybe you could mark some things that we'll talk about.

The Bible says, And a stranger they will not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers.

[1 : 29] This parable spake Jesus unto them, but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. I am the door. By me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pasture.

The thief cometh not but for to steal, to kill, and to destroy. I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

But he that is a hireling and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming and leaveth the sheep and fleeth. And the wolf catcheth them and scattereth the sheep.

The hireling fleeth because he's a hireling and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. And I know my sheep and am known of mine. As the father knoweth me, even so know I the father.

[2 : 33] And I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold. Them also I must bring and they shall hear my voice. And there shall be one fold and one shepherd.

Therefore, doth my father love me because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again.

This commandment have I received of my father. There was a division among the, therefore, again, among the Jews for these sayings. And many of them said, he hath a devil and is mad.

Why hear ye him? And others said, these are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind? Father God in heaven, I pray that you would work tonight.

And I pray you'd help us to love Jesus. And to see who he is. To see who you are. To see what you have done. And to be thankful for you and to magnify you. And I pray, dear God, that not only would you help us see you.

[3 : 34] But you'd help us see how we are to be like you. As we lead our homes and our Sunday school classes. And our children's church ministries. Or on the mission field. Or a church work.

Or wherever it is that you've placed us. That we are to be like you. And under you. And to follow your leadership. I pray, dear God, that you would bless us tonight. And I'll give you great honor and glory and praise for what you do.

In Jesus' precious name. Amen. Well, I'm going to be honest with you. How long am I going to stay on these 21 verses? So I'm not even going to rush tonight. I usually rush to finish a certain amount. But I probably want to preach four messages out of this.

I don't know. But let me just show you what's going on in the passage. Look, if you would, in John chapter 10, verses 1 through 6. And basically, you have a sheepfold. And that sheepfold was a place where all the shepherds in the community came in at night.

And they placed all their sheep inside this stone wall. In fact, as I had some pictures. I even thought about trying. But I'm so non-computer stuff when I'm preaching. But I had some pictures.

[4 : 34] And it's like got the barn in it. It's got the fence around it. It's got one gate. It was kind of a tunnel often. The way they built it. So that the sheep would go in. And the shepherds would all come in. And these shepherds knew their sheep.

Now, that part's not. It's in the Bible. We see it reflected here. But that's a part of their history. And they would walk in. They would come in. And as their sheep would fall in. These guys knew their sheep. They usually checked them out. It says in the.

And the guys explained what happened. And a guy that wrote about. A shepherd that talked about taking care of sheep. Talked about as they walked in. He checked out his sheep. And all of his sheep got in the fold. And he would come over to the.

To the sheep fold. When he got ready to leave the next morning. And he would just simply stand up. And say. All right guys. Let's go. And that guy's sheep knew his voice. And followed him like a dog would follow you. And so these sheep would come out.

And he knew their name. He named his sheep. And his sheep knew that he knew their name. The sheep knew him. He knew them. And they would all walk out with him. And Jesus says. And by the way. If a stranger were to call him.

[5 : 30] The sheep would run. He wouldn't follow them. The sheep know the shepherd. And the shepherd knows the sheep. That alone ought to be enough for us to talk about a little bit. Amen. The shepherd knows me.

Knows my name. Knows who I am. Knows where I'm living. Knows what I'm going through. And I know his voice. And I'm used to hearing from him. And used to following him. Which is what Ed just preached to us.

And then he talks about thieves and robbers. And he said the thieves and the robbers. They have to go over the wall. Well in verse 10 he says. That the thief comes but for the steel to kill and to destroy. But I'm come that you might have life.

And have it more abundantly. So we got these thieves. These false shepherds. These false prophets. These other religions. I mean there's a lot of them. That would come. That sheep fall that's somewhere right there.

Is the nation of Israel. And the nation of Israel. Had been looking to hear from God for a long time. And Jesus comes. And the porter. The guy that keeps the door. He's just a guy that's been hired by the shepherds.

[6 : 25] And he locks the door at night. Sometimes the shepherd would sleep. If it was a smaller sheep fall. He might sleep in the door. But often they hired a guy. It was his job to keep the sheep. While the guys they got a break. From having been with the sheep all day long.

And Jesus said the porter knows the shepherd. The sheep know the shepherd. The shepherd goes in through the front door. And he brings out his sheep. So I just want to talk to you just a little bit.

About that. And I want to talk to you about Jesus. So if you would go to verse 2. And we're just going to. I'm going to take my time. So you can write some things down. I really hope you enjoy this half as much as I have.

Number one thing I want you to notice. Is Jesus is a good shepherd. And he came with full authority from God. Jesus is the good shepherd. And he came with full authority from God.

Jesus is doing the talking. Jesus is telling the story. Jesus has got a parable. A saying. It's kind of a dark saying. Something that they didn't even understand. But you look at what he says. If you would in verse 2.

[7 : 23] He that entered them by the door. Is the shepherd of the sheep. He that entered them by the door. Is the shepherd of the sheep. He said. Now. See. The shepherd doesn't have to climb across the wall.

The shepherd doesn't have to sneak in. The porter knows him. The sheep know him. The shepherd doesn't have to try to steal him. Jesus said. Hey. I'm here. And I am the good shepherd. And so he has come to Israel.

Israel doesn't have anybody. It's been 400 years. Since they've heard a word from God. John the Baptist has finally come on the scene. Now Jesus is here. And Jesus says. I am the good shepherd. In their history.

They had a lot of people trying to lead. And abuse them. And use them. They had false shepherds. And false teachers. Look at verse 1. Chapter 10 and verse 1. Verily. Verily. I say unto you. He that entereth not by the door.

Into the sheep fold. But climbeth up some other way. The same as a thief and a robber. A thief and a robber. So there are. There were. False prophets.

[8 : 18] That would go to Israel. And by the way. You know that most religions. Have the world. Have started in the Middle East. You know that. You know that there's all sorts of lies. And not truth there. You know that there have been false prophets.

That spoke to. To the nation of Israel. And Jesus simply says. Here I am. All you religious people. Look. I am God. I am the good shepherd. I am the door of the sheep.

He's been saying. I am all through the Bible. It's like the fifth or sixth time. He said it in the book. And he said. I'm here. To bring them in. He comes with full authority. Look at the things that say. He has authority. If you would. In verse three.

The porter knows him. To him. The porter openeth. The doorkeeper. Opens the door. Because he said. Yep. I know you. I know you. I see you. I know that you're. You're in charge.

Then he says. The sheep know who the true shepherd is. Look at verse three. The sheep hear his voice. The sheep hear his voice. The true shepherd has no desire.

[9 : 13] To abuse the sheep. But he goes before them. Look at verse three. The porter opens. The sheep hears his voice. He calls the sheep by name. And he leads them out. They just follow him.

And when he puts forth his own sheep. He goes before them. And they follow him. They know he is the true shepherd. They know that he is the true shepherd. Now I'm going to show you.

Ezekiel 34 23. I hope you'll see that. It'll be on the wall here. Jesus was the promised shepherd leader from the Old Testament. I will set up one shepherd over them.

And he shall feed them. Even my servant David. He shall feed them. And he shall be their shepherd. Jesus is the shepherd. Sent from God.

And he's here. And he's there to lead them. Now. Two things I want to accomplish. This is Thursday night. This is more family night. This is leader night.

[10 : 10] This is Sunday school teacher night. This is missionary night. This is people in discipleship night. This is somebody. You're in foundations. You're discipling somebody else.

And so I really think that if we can look at this. We're going to find out just right now. About false shepherds. And false prophets. And the way they treated people. And we're going to find out how God's people. How Jesus treats people.

And how Jesus is in leadership. And we're going to see about who Jesus is. We're going to know how good he is. But at the same time. You know that. You know that. Basically. The leadership position he's put us in is like these shepherds.

The leadership position he's put us in is like these shepherds. And shepherds honestly get. They can be good and sweet and tender and kind and loving. Or they can be abusive and mean.

And dads can be loving and sweet and kind. And direct their families right. Or they can be abusive and mean. Sunday school teachers and disciples. There are people that are discipling people. They can be manipulative.

[11 : 06] And I just want you to go through the Bible. And I want to show you the. Jesus says I am the good shepherd. Well. You know. They've been talking about shepherds ever since. Abel. Was the keeper of sheep.

I mean shepherding is a part of their life. When they arrived in Egypt. Joseph said. Egyptians loathe. Hate. Can't stand shepherds. But you guys ask for the land of Goshen.

And they'll give it to you. And he'll let you end up being the shepherds of the sheep. This nation understands a shepherd. Their whole society kind of revolves around that shepherd idea.

Their king is a shepherd. Their prophet is a shepherd. Their pastor is a shepherd. Everybody in any kind of leadership position is a shepherd. So I want to walk through some verses with you. And I want to look at what their shepherds or their pastors did.

I want to make sure I'm not doing that. I want to make sure you're not doing that. I just want us to grow in the Lord tonight. Look if you would at Jeremiah chapter 2 and verse 8. In Jeremiah chapter 2 and verse 8. The pastors had transgressed against the Lord.

[12 : 08] Now an interesting note for you. If you knew Spanish you'd know this. It is hard to tell. When you say the word pastor. You have to have context to know if you're saying shepherd or pastor. And when I first got to Peru.

And there were almost no missionaries. And there were almost no evangelical churches. And people would ask me what I did. I didn't say missionary. I would say pastor. And I can remember saying to more than one person. I'm a pastor. And they would say really?

You have sheep? And I said no, no, no, no, no. Not that kind of sheep. Not four-legged sheep. I'm a pastor. They really didn't understand it. That's the word pastor. And so look here if you would. It's the same idea in the Bible.

Jeremiah chapter 2 and verse 8. The priest said not. Where is the Lord? And they that had the law knew me not. The pastors also transgressed against me. And the prophets prophesied by Baal.

And walked after things that do not profit. Now, I'm just going to go. I literally, I don't even do this here. But we're going to pretend we're in Peru tonight. And so I'm just going to talk to you from my heart. Would you look at this verse right here?

[13 : 10] Their priests, their spiritual leaders didn't say, where's the Lord? Their priests and their spiritual leaders didn't say, man, I want to know God. I want to know what his will is. They that handled the law didn't know him.

They that knew, those that were supposed to know Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The books of the law. The Pentateuch. The books of Moses. They might have known some law, but they didn't know Jesus.

The pastors transgressed against him. The prophets prophesied by Baal. And they walked after things that do not profit. Might I say that this group here, we're kind of like leaders.

I would assume that if I really went down and said, all right, everybody's either a missionary, teaching and foundations, a Sunday school teacher, or you have some ministry. I bet you I would just about get everybody in this room.

And if I don't, I hope I will. I hope you sooner are doing one of those things. And here's what's going on. Jesus said, I'm the good shepherd. But these Jewish people knew that their prophets and everybody had been saying, we've had some really bad leaders.

[14 : 09] We've had some really bad leaders. We've had some really jerkos leading the nation of Israel. And then he tells us exactly what they did. And so I'd like to talk to husbands in a minute.

You're a shepherd. If you're a husband, you're a shepherd. You have a wife and you have children. In fact, if you're a mother, you're a shepherd. You got children that you get to shepherd. If you're a discipler, you're shepherding someone.

If you're a Sunday school teacher, you're shepherding someone. Would you look at this? Let me ask you, are you? Let's just take one of the things out of the verse. Look in Jeremiah chapter 2 verse 8, last saying, they walked after things that do not profit.

Are you, as a man of God, are you, as a woman of God, walking after things that do not profit? Might I say that I'm afraid that you think profit means dollar signs.

But in God's economy, money is worthless. And somewhere along the way, we changed our philosophy.

[15 : 06] We got the idea that money was a good and desired end. And money is never a good and desired end. It really doesn't profit. God's going to use money as the streets in heaven.

God's going to use money to build a business. I can hear you now. Brother, we couldn't have a church without money. Well, I guess that means we don't need to bring an offer. I can just hear you now. But see, the whole point is, seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

And all these things will be added to you. Matthew chapter 6 and verse 33. Matthew chapter 6 and verse 24. I can show you that he said, you'll have to choose between God and Mammon. Because you've got to hate one and love the other. And we're spiritual leaders.

We're spiritual leaders. These verses will work over in any country in the world. And some of those countries in the world, they'll live all day long. And they'll be lucky if they just got enough to eat.

Are we walking the way we're supposed to? Look at Jeremiah chapter 3 and verse 15, if you would. Jeremiah chapter 3 and verse 15. I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

[16 : 10] Pastors which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. The pastors that God wants would be pastors who would share Bible. Share truth.

Boy, that's one of the most wonderful things you get to do if you're a discipler. If you're working in foundations and you're helping train another person, you realize what you're doing? You're sharing knowledge of the things of God. You're sharing understanding of the things of God.

You're telling somebody else how to grow in God. And that's the kind of pastor he's looking for. I realize you're going to say right here, you're going to say, no, this is talking about you, not us. But honestly, there's plenty of verses I can show you the other way.

It talks about all of us in our leadership role. Jeremiah chapter 10 and verse 21. The pastors had become brutes. Brutish, dumb, stupid animals. They didn't seek the Lord and they didn't prosper and their flocks were scattered.

What was brutish about them? What was animal-like about them? Was they didn't seek the Lord. And I would ask you as Christians in our church, how much are you seeking the Lord?

[17 : 13] How much is he your focus? Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you. How much is Jesus the focus of your life? Do you start off the day saying, I'm going to seek the Lord Jesus?

Do you spend some time in prayer saying, I want to seek the Lord Jesus? Are we seeking him? Are we becoming animal-like? Brutes. Brutes. Brutes. Dumb brutes that don't seek the Lord.

Is that who we become? That's what these pastors and spiritual leaders were way back when. Jeremiah chapter 23 verses 1 and 2. Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture, saith the Lord.

Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people. You have scattered my flock and driven them away. You haven't visited them. And behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings.

Circle feed my people. Do you know that everybody in our church, we all ought to become, first I ought to be a self-feeder. I ought to learn to get a hold of God and I ought to learn to learn the things of God. But second, I ought to learn how to feed other people.

[18 : 13] And I ought to learn how to show people how to know Jesus and how to walk in grace. And how for the Bible to become alive to them. I ought to be a Bible teacher. Ezekiel 34, 2 through 10. Bad shepherds.

Bad shepherds. That's what they were used to. Jesus is a good shepherd. Ezekiel 34, 2 through 10. And we won't read all those verses. But he says, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel in verse 2.

And look why he says that. Would you look at verse 2? He said, because they feed themselves and they don't feed the flock. You know what had happened? The shepherds in the Old Testament had become much like prosperity gospel preachers today.

That had learned how to make a living off the people. How to take care of themselves. How to get things from God for themselves. How to use and abuse the system. But the question here is, do we feed the flock?

Do I help my wife know the things of Jesus? Did you know you really can't be a pastor until you can lead your own home and teach your own home about the things of God? And a deacon is supposed to be like a pastor.

[19 : 15] And a deacon and a regular church member basically ought to be about the same. I mean, we ought to be people that are training and teaching our families about Jesus. I would hope that at your funeral, ma'am. I would hope at your funeral, if I'm around to preach your funeral.

I would hope that your kids would say to me, my mama taught me about Jesus. I would hope they would say to me, boy, mama used to have that Bible out. And mama used to pray for me. And mama was the most godly woman in my life.

And mama taught me about Jesus. I hope they'd say that about daddy. I hope they'd say, boy, daddy really loved Jesus. And he taught me about Jesus. They fed feed the flock. Feed the flock. Verse 3, but you feed not the flock.

You feed not the flock. For you missionaries, because this is mostly to us as leaders, the diseased, have you not strengthened? Neither have you healed that which was sick.

And neither have you bound up that which was broken. Neither have you brought again that which was driven away. Neither have you sought that which was lost. Look at this. But with force and with cruelty have you ruled them. The pastors of the Old Testament, the shepherds of the Old Testament were jerks.

[20 : 21] Many of them. If you'll notice verse 4, and if you mark your Bible, look at the words that go with what we do. Strengthen, heal, bind up, bring again, seek.

Look at them. You got them marked in your Bible? Look at what we do in verse 4. Strengthen, heal, bind up, bring again, seek. But instead of doing that, they with force and cruelty ruled them.

And in verse 5, the sheep were like, it's no good to be here. Why do you reckon a sheep follows a shepherd? You know, that sheep follows that shepherd because it's a good thing to do. You know why that sheep follows that shepherd?

That sheep's saying, hey, he's taking me where there's some good food. Hey, he's taking me where there's some good water. Hey, he's taking me. And by the way, if a lion comes out, he'll take care of the lion. And if a bear comes out, he'll take care of the bear.

And if a wolf comes out, he'll take care of the wolf. Hey, in his presence, I am fed. In his presence, I am watered. In his presence, I am protected. I like my shepherd. That's what every kid ought to think about their mom and dad.

[21 : 22] That's what every Sunday school teacher ought to think about us. We ought to say, boy, God has really put somebody there to work in our lives. In verse 8, the shepherds fed themselves and they don't feed my flock.

In verse 8. Verse 10, he said, I'm against the shepherds. I am against the shepherds. And it ends up, verse 10, saying, neither shall the shepherds feed themselves anymore.

I knew that you might say to me, how does that have anything to do with the New Testament? And just let me say that maybe it probably applies mostly to me. But I think it also applies to all of you.

I think if you're a Sunday school teacher, you're an extension of the pastoral team of the church. You are also teaching and you're also pastoring. And no matter how much pastors like to elevate themselves and act like they're way up here, the truth is, if you're a discipler, you are pastoring some people and you are teaching some people and you're instructing some people.

And if you're a Sunday school teacher or if you're a children's church worker, you're working with the teens, whatever you're doing, if you're a dad, if you're a mom, you have tremendous privileges.

[22 : 26] Look at what the Bible says in Ephesians chapter 4, verses 11 through 16. New Testament now. And I have switched gears. Because, you see, Jesus said, I am the good shepherd.

Those words would ring true to them because they were used to not having really good shepherds. They were used to really not having good spiritual leaders. They'd had Moses who did pretty good and they had Joshua who did pretty good.

And then the judges would do pretty good and then they'd do something really good. And they'd rule for 40 years, but they'd only do something really good like once or twice a lot of times. And their whole time of leadership.

Then they had Saul who didn't do too good and they had David who kind of messed up. And then they had Solomon who kind of really messed up at the end. They were used to poor spiritual leadership.

And Jesus comes along and he says to the nation of Israel, I am the good shepherd. And you and I are an extension of his ministry. He's the real shepherd. We're not shepherds. We're under shepherds.

[23 : 22] He's the shepherd. But I'm working on his team. I'm on his team. I'm the guy that's supposed to be fulfilling. I'm his fingers. I'm his hand. I'm him. I'm letting him work through me.

That's what it is. I'm crucified with Christ and nevertheless I live. Yet not I, but Christ lives in me. That's the truth of every one of us. Galatians 2.20. Is that true or not? Amen. All right. Now look at this verse, would you?

In Ephesians chapter 4 verse 11, he gave them gifted people. That included those pastors. In verse 12, for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body. Look, if you would, in verse 13.

There's a problem in the Old Testament because nobody taught the people. There had become a great spiritual dearth, famine, lack.

God's people didn't know truth. God's people didn't know truth. God's people didn't know what to do and what not to do. God's people didn't recognize good and bad, right and wrong, dark and light.

[24 : 20] God's people didn't understand what they'll do because the shepherds failed. And today the church is failing. And I'll take 99% of the responsibility here at our church, but I'm going to tell you, if you're a discipler here or a Sunday school teacher here, you might ought to help with some of this.

So look if you would at verse 13. What do we do? We work with them and we mature them till all come to the unity of the faith. Now that's not saying the party line.

That's not saying we agree with what the preacher says in the pulpit. That means we've taught them enough that they say, I understand what the Bible says. And I believe what the Bible says.

And I'll apply what the Bible says because I have come to understand this is what the Bible says. That's our church's job. Unity, unity of the faith and of knowledge, knowledge of the son of God.

Verse 14. We're supposed to do this so that they will be henceforth be no more children. No more children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the slight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive.

[25 : 24] It was 200 years ago before there were Mormons. It was 200 years ago before we got Mormons. Just a little over 100 years ago before we got the Pentecostal charismatic movement that went crazy.

Jehovah's Witnesses are new. The Church of Christ is new. The honest truth is a lot of junks come in and a lot of people don't know what the truth is because we no longer have Bible teaching, Bible preaching churches.

And we want a church that's going to be really emotional and we want a church that's going to be really exciting. And you might find that your discipleship ministry is not that important. You say, all I do is read the Bible with somebody teaching the Bible.

And you really think that's not important. But I'm telling you, it's like super important. I'm telling you, he wants them fed. I'm telling you, he wants them to grow and he wants them to get into the unity of the faith.

And God in heaven is like, teach my people. Teach my people. Don't leave my people hanging out to dry where they don't know what to do. The Antichrist will come along sooner or later, probably sooner.

[26 : 25] And when he does, so many people we think are Christians are going to blow with the wind and go with him. And I've been in the ministry so many years. I've watched, man, I watched the faith healers come in and the people swing with them.

And I watched the tongue speaker come in and they swung with them. And then I watched, you know, you just watch it, man. They go from one post to the other post. And the reason is we're not Bible teachers. Boy, that Sunday school class of yours is far more important than you think it is.

And that discipleship class of yours is far more, it's not a take up time thing. And it's not a little ministry we give you so you can feel important. It is because you're supposed to help take them on to maturity.

So they understand the things of God. Look, if you would, at verse 14, he said, I don't want them to be like children anymore. I don't want to be like children anymore. You wouldn't know this probably because you're not connected to maybe some of the big stuff that goes on among the non-independent Baptist, non-vision things that go on.

But man, there's a big argument going on right now with some of the major preachers in America about the Trinity. And how is God and Jesus and the Holy Spirit? Are they three persons?

[27 : 31] Are they three manifestations? There's this big argument going on. There's this big thing going on right now. You might have heard about it. It's a prosperity gospel. And the biggest preachers in America, their main goal is to help you get money.

They are following things that don't profit. Their whole ministry is about profit. Look at verse 14. We henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the slight of men.

You know, by the slick moves of the hands, by the guy who can work magic tricks with his hands, slight of hand movements, cunning craftiness. He's slick, they're dumb, and they wait to deceive.

But we speak the truth in love. Look at this. Underline it. That they may grow up into him. We'll underline that. Grow up into him in all things. What do we want them to grow up into?

Into the head. Jesus. Christ. Man, we want them to know him. You ought to take that to the discipleship class you got. You're working one-on-one and you think that's unimportant. That is super important.

[28 : 38] And when you help that person understand justification, and when you help that person understand forgiveness of sins, and when you help that person understand imputation, you're doing a great work because you're growing them up into Jesus.

Even the people that stand and sing a song here. It's not about the singer. It's about the truth being taught. Verse 16. Look at verse 16.

The whole body. It's never God's plan for you to be separated. It's never God's plan for you to be isolated. God has no, there's nothing in the Bible about individual Christians standing alone.

It's always us working together. The whole body. Look at what it says about the body. Fitly joined together. That means it works together. That means it just meets together.

That means it belongs that way. It's joined together. Look at it. Compacted. Look at it. Every joint supplies. Every person. Every little thing in the church is important.

[29 : 47] And it works to the effectual working. And it makes the body increase. What a tremendous privilege to be a missionary out of our church. What a tremendous privilege to be a discipler that discipled somebody else.

What a tremendous privilege to work in a Sunday school class. What a tremendous privilege to sing a special in this place. Or to play in this. What a tremendous privilege to share truth.

Because all we want is everybody to grow up in Jesus. Fall in love with him. And be excited about him. Go with me if you would to 1 Peter chapter 5. Verses 1 through 4.

1 Peter 5, 1 through 4. The elders which are among you 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.

Now Peter's talking to pastors. And the New Testament word for a pastor is really an elder. The word pastors only found like one time in the whole New Testament. And the elders the more used word.

[30 : 45] And he said the elders which are among you I exhort. And I'm also an elder. The spiritual leaders, the pastors. Look at verse 2 what he says. Would you circle it? Feed the flock. Feed the flock.

Feed the flock. That is the most important thing that we get to do around here. Feed the flock. An army moves on his belly.

No food. They won't fight well. The church grows by being fed. Peter said. Jesus said to Peter. Do you love me? Feed. Do you love me? Feed.

Right? Didn't he? Feed. Feed. Verse 2. Feed the flock. Taking the oversight thereof. Not by constraint. But willingly. Not for filthy lucre. But of a ready mind. Neither as being lords.

We're never bosses around here. Jesus wasn't into leadership. He was into servants. Jesus was into taking off his outer garment. Putting a towel around his waist.

[31 : 43] And washing feet. Neither being lords. What's it mean to feed the flock? What's it mean to feed the flock? I thought maybe you might ask that question. What's it mean to feed the flock? How about Hebrews 5.

12 through 14? You know those verses? Hebrews 5. 12 through. I couldn't preach this on a Sunday morning. Because I just couldn't ramble like I am. Hebrews 5. 12 through 14. Look at it. For when you ought to be teachers.

You have need that one teach you again. Which be the first principles of the oracles of God. And to become such as have need of milk. And not a strong meat. Now this is interesting. The book was written to Hebrews. Not to pastors.

And you know what he said? He said. You guys ought to be teachers by now. Huh. You guys ought to be doing foundations by now. You guys ought to be teaching somebody else.

You guys ought to be doing some ministry around here. But since you hadn't been doing it. What I need to give you is milk. And not strong meat. See those are. Those are food items. Right? Look at it. He said. You have need of milk and not strong meat.

[32 : 41] Verse 13. He said. Everyone that uses milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness. Verse 14. But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age.

So you know what God said? He said to the Hebrews. He said. Guys. Y'all ought to all be teachers. Could I. Would you listen to me? Hey. You ought to be a teacher. You say. Well I don't have time.

I'm at home. You're a teacher at home. Don't just teach math and science. And wash behind your ears. Don't just teach them how to clip their fingernails. Teach them about Jesus.

Grow them up into Jesus. Teach them about Jesus. You're saying. I'm a husband. But I'm kind of. I'm kind of nervous. And I feel real self-conscious about being a teacher.

But you can talk to your wife. And share what Jesus is sharing with you. Teach. Teach. In Acts chapter 20. Verse 28. He was talking to the pastors.

[33 : 36] And he said. Take heed to yourselves. And to all the flock. There comes the flock again. The sheep. The flock. Over which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers. To feed the church of God.

Feed the church of God. You know what Job said in Job 23. 12. He said. I've esteemed the words of his mouth. More than my necessary food. Job said.

If I had to choose between that ribeye and the word of God. I'll take the word of God. The word of God is more important. We don't really think like that. Would you be honest? We really don't think like that.

And we come to church. And you know. This has been one of my pet peeves and gripes. And we don't do it here at this church. But it was always like. When I. Especially when I was a youth director. As long as they were playing battle ball.

Or volleyball. Or football. And as long as they were singing or playing. And then they'd say. All right. We've had fun. Fun's over. Time for the preacher. Oh.

[34 : 29] I used to hate that. I told him. I said. You say. You know. I ain't gonna let you do nothing around here. But that's the way we look at it. Isn't it? Hey. We were. You know what. You know what we think in church today. We worshiped when we sang.

But it often is not worship. It's torture. And preaching is boring. Somehow we got this messed up. It's the word of God they need. People need the word of God.

Why are they losing their salvation? They're probably not losing their salvation. Nobody ever taught them anything. Why are they so concerned? Why are they so scared? Why are their lives so messed up? Because we don't teach. That's why you need to be involved.

Why? There are false prophets among us. Matthew chapter 7 and verse 15 says. Beware of false prophets. They come in sheep's clothing. But they're ravening. Inwardly they are ravening crazy wolves.

In Acts chapter 20. I'm gonna quit. But in Acts chapter 20. Verses 26 through 32. Just let me skip through those verses. If you got your Bible there.

[35 : 29] Paul said to that church. He said. I have not. I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Paul said. Hey guys. I've been teaching you this book. And I've not held anything back.

I've been teaching you this book. I've been teaching you the things you like to hear. The things you don't like to hear. I've not shunned to tell you all the things. In verse 29. Those grievous wolves are coming in.

And they're not sparing the flock. He said. I know this. After my departing. Shall grievous wolves enter in among you. Not sparing the flock. Verse 30. Some of them. They will draw disciples away.

After them. You know what it was like. They were gonna lose. They were gonna lose. People. Because of. Others. Deceiving them. Could I just.

End. The evening. By saying this. I want you. When you see the. The next. Wind blow. That brings some stupid doctrine through.

[36 : 30] I want our church people to be the ones that say. Whoa. Whoa. Whoa. Let me think about that. Here's what the Bible says. Not going with that one. Not. No. No. No. No. You're not tricking me on that one.

And I. And the next pastor that comes in. Here. Or wherever he is. Or the place you're at. And he starts trying to manipulate you. And he starts trying to teach you things. I want you to. No. No. No. No. This is what the Bible says right here.

Look at here. This is what the Bible says. We ought to teach each other. We ought to get a hold of the Bible. We ought to get a hold of the Bible. And learn the Bible. I mean. God's people ought to come in here and say.

Man. I want to know Jesus. I want to know his Bible. By the way. How do you know Jesus? Now you know Jesus. You know Jesus through his book. I mean. The only way he reveals himself. And you can blast me from my infantile mind.

But in the beginning was the word. And the word was with God. And the word was God. And I. I. You know. I can hear you right now. You're going to come over. Brother. That's not Jesus. But you know what? Jesus is the word.

[37 : 30] The word is Jesus. Man. I can't figure out how they separate. So I want to know Jesus. I just want to know the book. I just can't figure out how they separate. I just can't figure out how they separate.

Everything I know about Jesus. I know from the word. I have the mind of Christ. The Bible said. Paul said we have the mind of Christ. I think I got it right there. I got. I think God gave it to me right there.

Boy. I want our people to know the Bible. You are. Privileged. But you have responsibility. Boy. It's an awesome responsibility to be a teacher.

It's an awesome responsibility to be a mother. It's an awesome responsibility to be a dad. It's an awesome responsibility to be a husband. It's an awesome responsibility to have the privilege of discipling somebody else about Jesus.

It's an awesome responsibility to pastor a church. And then there have been a lot of jerks that have used people and manipulated people. That ought never be the way we do things. We teach them Jesus.

[38 : 27] We teach them the book. I want to challenge you to leave here. And I know you're going to say. Well brother. I thought it was about I am the good shepherd. It is. But see you don't know the good shepherd. I mean the context.

I am the good shepherd. He was contrasting that with all the jerks that had come before. And he looks at him and said. I'm the good shepherd. I'm not a thief or a robber. I'm not in this for the money. I'm not taking advantage of you.

I'm not abusing you. I'm not unkind to you. The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. That's what he was saying. Now here on earth. The people aren't going to know the shepherd. They're going to know us.

They're going to come through that door. Are they going to be faced with somebody that loves them and cares about them? That will take the word of God and teach them about Jesus. And love them and show them Jesus and his grace. Will they? So I challenge you men.

Let's take it seriously. Well what a privilege. I have. To be a pastor. What a privilege you have. You know the day you get married. Your life radically changes overnight.

[39 : 24] The day before you're responsible for one. The next day you're responsible for two. I wouldn't change a bit of that. But it is a completely different way of doing it.

And you'll hear why one? Hey man. Are you ready? When I don't. When I don't take care of my spiritual life. I hurt my wife's spiritual life.

Because I'm the man. And I'm supposed to walk with God. And I'm supposed to be a leader. We love it when we get to say. Submit to me. Bless God. I'm the husband. Jesus said.

You got to submit. We love that part. But you know. That's really a pretty horrible part for you. Because when somebody has to submit to you. It means they're going to hold you accountable. For the mistakes of the guy that's doing the submitting.

Say amen. You're a husband. Are you walking with Jesus? Are you seeking him? You're a Sunday school teacher.

[40 : 21] You take that class seriously? Do you say. Man I get to walk in there. And open the precious word. And share it. You're a disciple. You meet with one or two people. And you share. Do you take that seriously?

I mean is this a big deal? If it's not. It should be. Feed the flock. Feed the sheep. Feed the sheep.

Feed the sheep. Father in heaven. I love you. I thank you for the chance to study your word. And I pray God. That somehow you help this drive into our hearts. The awesome responsibility.

I pray God. That you'd have some others surrender to working foundations. I pray dear God. That some others would come forward. And say I'm ready to get involved in more ministry. I pray some wives. Would say I'm going to follow my husband.

And help my children. And some husbands. Would take the responsibility. Of being the spiritual leader in their home. And I pray that your name. Would just be magnified tonight. Through this passage of scripture. You have been listening to Austin Gardner.

[41 : 21] Pastor of Vision Baptist Church. For contact information. Location. Service times. Or more audio and video recordings. Log on to www.visionbaptist.com com.