

02 – THE UNDERSHEPHERD

- ✓ It's impossible to discuss the pastor's office without mentioning the shepherd's heart. (It's the most outstanding characteristic of the office.)

Jer. 3:15a – “I will appoint for you shepherds who share my heart ...”

- ✓ Most people call this the “shepherd's heart”. But my wife calls it being a “mother hen”. (That might sound silly, but I can't improve on it.) It's the desire to watch over and care for people. (If you're *truly* a pastor, that heart is there!)
- ✓ I've met some pastors, who stood in the *office*, but didn't seem to *have* a shepherd's heart. In those cases, all I can tell you is either that person isn't called, or he's in the wrong office.

What About Authoritarian Pastors?

- ✓ Occasionally, you'll run into a pastor that has a “My way or the highway” attitude. (Bev and I had a pastor like that once. It was before we came into Victory.) He was always talking about his *authority*, and how everybody needed to *obey* him. The Bible does talk about pastoral authority. But ...

1.) It's a Benevolent Authority

2 Cor. 10:8 – “I speak freely about the authority the Lord has given us. The Lord gave us that authority to build you up, not to tear you down.”

2.) It's a Gracious Authority

Mark 10:42 – “Jesus, however, called them to Him and said to them, ‘You are aware how those who are deemed rulers among the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men make them feel their authority; but it is not to be so among you. No, whoever desires to be great must be your servant.’” (Wey)

3.) It's a Limited Authority

2 Cor. 1:24 – “Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy.” (MSG – “We're not in charge of how you live out the faith ...”)

- ✓ I don't have the authority to tell you what *music* to listen to, which *TV shows* to watch, or where to go on vacation. I don't have authority over your personal life. What I do have, is the right to influence you.

Heb. 13:17 – “Obey your spiritual leaders and submit to them ...”

- ✓ This isn't the usual word for “obey”. (Like we'd see in Eph. 6:1.) In this verse, the writer uses the word “peitho (Pī-thō). Peitho was the Greek goddess of *persuasion*, and that's what the word means.
- ✓ When the Bible tells you to “obey” your leaders, it's telling you to “be persuadable”. (Let the Word of God persuade you!) As a pastor, God has called me to *persuade* you; to *convince* you with the Word of God. (My job is to win you over, not bow! you over.)
- ✓ As I said, there is a pastoral authority. But it's not authority over your personal life. Primarily, it's the authority to function in my job description. What's my job description? It's threefold: A shepherd leads, a shepherd feeds, and a shepherd protects.

A. A Shepherd Leads

- ✓ In the latter part of 1 Cor. 12, Paul is discussing the 5-fold ministry. When he describes the office of the “pastor”, one of the words he uses is “kubernesis”. It means to “steer, pilot, or direct”. (The board guides the financial side of the church, and the pastor directs the spiritual side.)

“What's Your Church's Vision?”

- ✓ In recent years, it's become popular for churches and ministries to

craft a “vision (or mission) statement” that encapsulates what they believe that God’s called them to do. There’s nothing wrong with that. Our church has a vision statement. (We’ll talk about that in a moment.) But before we go there, I want to address a verse that’s often been misunderstood.

- ✓ Whenever you talk about a church’s “vision”, invariably someone brings up Proverbs 29:18 – “Where there is no **vision**, the people perish.”
- ✓ Now, here’s where we missed it. We took our definition of the word “vision”, and we applied it to the word that Solomon used 3000 years ago. But here’s the problem. Our word “vision” and his word “vision” don’t mean the same thing. (Words change meaning over time.) When we talk about our church’s “vision”, we’re essentially asking, “Why do we exist? What are we trying to accomplish?”. But Solomon’s word didn’t mean that at all! Look at some other translations of Prov. 29:18.

Amp, ASV – “Where there is **no revelation of God’s Word**, the people cast off restraint.”

Prov. 29:18 – “Where there is **no understanding of the Word**, the people do whatever they want to.” (NLV)

- ✓ Solomon’s not saying that every church needs to come up with a vision statement. He’s saying that every church needs to preach the Word, so people don’t run amok. (One translation said it that way.)

Does a Church Need To Have a “Vision”?

- ✓ The truth is, in the broadest sense, every church has the *same* vision. (We call it the Great Commission.) Beyond that, we can define what PART of the Great Commission we feel called and equipped to do. (But whatever we come up with is going to be a variation on what God already gave us. We don’t try to come up with something other than what Jesus gave us.)

B. A Shepherd Feeds

Jer. 3:15 – “I will give you *shepherds who share my heart, who shall **feed you with knowledge and understanding** ...*”

- ✓ Part of the pastor’s role is to feed the sheep. One of the qualifications for the position, according to 1 Tim. 3:2, is “apt to teach”. The Amplified says “he must be a capable and qualified teacher”. My favorite definition of teaching is found in the Old Testament book of Nehemiah.

Nehemiah 8:8 – “They read in the book of the Law distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading ... the Levites that **taught** the people.”

- ✓ The Amplified says, “faithfully **amplifying** (the Word) and **giving the sense**.” The ERV says, “They **made it easy to understand**, and **explained what it meant**.” The result was that “the people understood”, and walked in freedom (Jer. 3:15, Jer. 23:4).

Teaching for Spiritual Growth

John 21:15-17 – “So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?’ He said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘Feed My lambs.’ He said to him again a second time, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?’ He said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘Feed My sheep.’

He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?’ **Peter was grieved** because He said to him the third time, ‘Do you love Me?’ And he said to Him, ‘Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed My sheep.’”

- ✓ There are two massive revelations in this passage. One concerns the word “**love**”. When Peter was grieved, I thought he was tired of Jesus asking the same question over and over. That wasn’t it at all!

- ✓ The first two times, Jesus asked Peter, “Do you AGAPE me?” (“Do you love me with the God-kind of committed, unconditional, covenant love?”) Peter answered, “Lord, You know that I PHILEO you.” Phileo is a *friendship* love. Jesus was asking, “Are you totally ‘sold out’ to me? Are you deeply in love with me?” Peter answered, “Yeah, I kinda like you.”
- ✓ Jesus asked the same question twice. On the third time, Jesus dropped a level of love and said, “Do you PHILEO (‘like’) me?” Peter was grieved that the Lord had to drop a level of love. He said, “Lord, you know all things. You know that I like you.” (1 Peter 1:8 – Agape)
- ✓ The second revelation has to do with “feeding” the sheep. In the first statement, Jesus said to BOSKO (spoon-feed) the lambs (babies). The spiritual babies in a congregation need to be spoon-fed.
- ✓ In the next statement, Peter is told to POIMAINO (or “pastor”) the mature sheep. Mature believers can get a lot of their own food, spiritually speaking. But they never outgrow the need for a pastor.
- ✓ In the third statement, Jesus switches back to the first word and says, “BOSKO (spoon-feed) my mature sheep”. Why? No matter how mature people may be, there are still areas in which they are undeveloped. So, the pastor needs to *identify* those areas and spoon-feed the mature sheep, until they grow out of those areas of immaturity.

C. A Shepherd Protects

Acts 20:28 – “Take heed therefore unto your-selves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, (from the outside) not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, (people from the inside) speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch ...” (2 Peter 2:1, Matt. 7:15)