

EXPERIENCING, ENJOYING, AND EXPRESSING CHRIST (3)

Message Ten

Shepherding according to God

JL Hymns: 398, 857

Scripture Reading: John 21:15-17; 10:9-17; 1 Pet. 5:2, 4; 2:25; Heb. 13:20

- John 21:15 Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, 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.
- John 21:16 He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.
- John 21:17 He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that 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.
- John 10:9 I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved and shall go in and go out and shall find pasture.
- John 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly.
- John 10:11 I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.
- John 10:12 He who is a hireling and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.
- John 10:13 He flees because he is a hireling and it does not matter to him concerning the sheep.
- John 10:14 I am the good Shepherd, and I know My own, and My own know Me,
- John 10:15 Even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.
- John 10:16 And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must lead them also, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one flock, one Shepherd.
- John 10:17 For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.
- 1 Pet 5:2 Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly;
- 1 Pet 5:4 And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.
- 1 Pet 2:25 For you were like sheep being led astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.
- Heb 13:20 Now the God of peace, He who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, in the blood of an eternal covenant,

I. Shepherding is to take all-inclusive tender care of the flock; shepherding refers to taking care of all the needs of the sheep—John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28.

- John 21:15 Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, 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.
- John 21:16 He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.
- John 21:17 He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that 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.
- Acts 20:28 Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers to shepherd the church of God, which He obtained through His own blood.

II. The two basic elements of shepherding are cherishing and nourishing—Eph. 5:29:

- Eph 5:29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ also the church,
- A. To shepherd is to comfort, to soothe, to nurture with tender love, and to foster with tender care.

- B. In shepherding others, we should first cherish them to make them happy, and then we should nourish them.

III. In the Lord's recovery today there is an urgent need of shepherding—John 21:16; 1 Pet. 5:2, 4:

John 21:16 He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.

1 Pet 5:2 Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly;

1 Pet 5:4 And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

A. The greatest lack among us is in the matter of shepherding.

B. In His organic salvation God the Father first regenerates us by God the Spirit and then shepherds us in God the Son as our Shepherd that we may exist and grow in His life for eternity—1:3; John 10:11; Rev. 7:17.

1 Pet 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has regenerated us unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

John 10:11 I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

Rev 7:17 For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and guide them to springs of waters of life; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

C. Shepherding the believers is crucial for their growth in the divine life unto maturity for the building up of the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:13-16.

Eph 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

Eph 4:14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,

Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,

Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

D. The shepherding that builds up the Body of Christ is a mutual shepherding—1 Cor. 12:23-26:

1 Cor 12:23 And those members of the body which we consider to be less honorable, these we clothe with more abundant honor; and our uncomely members come to have more abundant comeliness,

1 Cor 12:24 But our comely members have no need. But God has blended the body together, giving more abundant honor to the member that lacked,

1 Cor 12:25 That there would be no division in the body, but that the members would have the same care for one another.

1 Cor 12:26 And whether one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or one member is glorified, all the members rejoice with it.

1. All believers, regardless of their stage of spiritual growth, need shepherding; we all have defects and shortcomings and need others to shepherd us.

2. We need to be under the organic shepherding of Christ and to be one with Him to shepherd others—John 10:11, 16; Heb. 13:20-21; 1 Pet. 5:4; 2:25.

John 10:11 I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

John 10:16 And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must lead them also, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one flock, one Shepherd.

Heb 13:20 Now the God of peace, He who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, in the blood of an eternal covenant,

Heb 13:21 Perfect you in every good work for the doing of His will, doing in us that which is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

- 1 Pet 5:4 And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.
- 1 Pet 2:25 For you were like sheep being led astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.
3. We are both sheep and shepherds, shepherding and being shepherded in mutuality; through this shepherding, the church is built up into the Body of Christ—Heb. 5:14; Eph. 4:12-13.
- Heb 5:14 But solid food is for the full-grown, who because of practice have their faculties exercised for discriminating between both good and evil.
- Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,
- Eph 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,
- E. The more we are constituted with Christ, the more we will spontaneously live a shepherding life and have the burden to take care of others—Col. 1:27; 3:10-11, 14:
- Col 1:27 To whom God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory,
- Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,
- Col 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.
- Col 3:14 And over all these things put on love, which is the uniting bond of perfectness.
1. The constitution of Christ in our spiritual life has a shepherding aspect—John 21:15-17.
- John 21:15 Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, 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.
- John 21:16 He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.
- John 21:17 He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that 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.
2. Shepherding is not a matter of responding to being encouraged by others to shepherd.
3. Shepherding is the issue of being constituted with Christ—Col. 3:4, 10-11.
- Col 3:4 When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.
- Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,
- Col 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.
4. The part of our being that has been constituted with Christ is the part that shepherds others.
5. We cannot shepherd anyone; the Christ constituted into us is the Shepherd—John 10:11; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:2, 4; Heb. 13:20.
- John 10:11 I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.
- 1 Pet 2:25 For you were like sheep being led astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.
- 1 Pet 5:2 Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly;
- 1 Pet 5:4 And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.
- Heb 13:20 Now the God of peace, He who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, in the blood of an eternal covenant,

F. We need to shepherd the flock of God according to the loving and tender heart of our Father God and according to the seeking and shepherding Spirit of our Savior Christ—Luke 15:1-32:

- Luke 15:1 Now all the tax collectors and sinners were drawing near to Him to hear Him.
- Luke 15:2 And both the Pharisees and the scribes murmured among themselves, saying, This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.
- Luke 15:3 And He told them this parable, saying,
- Luke 15:4 Which man of you, who has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?
- Luke 15:5 And when he finds it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.
- Luke 15:6 And when he comes into his house, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.
- Luke 15:7 I tell you that in the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner repenting than over ninety-nine righteous persons who have no need of repentance.
- Luke 15:8 Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one silver coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek carefully until she finds it?
- Luke 15:9 And when she finds it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I lost.
- Luke 15:10 In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner repenting.
- Luke 15:11 And He said, A certain man had two sons.
- Luke 15:12 And the younger of them said to the father, Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me. And he distributed to them his living.
- Luke 15:13 And not many days after, the younger son, having gathered everything together, went abroad to a distant country and there squandered his estate by living dissolutely.
- Luke 15:14 And when he had spent all, a severe famine occurred throughout that country, and he began to be in want.
- Luke 15:15 And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed hogs.
- Luke 15:16 And he longed to be satisfied with the carob pods which the hogs were eating, and no one gave him anything.
- Luke 15:17 But when he came to himself, he said, How many of my father's hired servants abound in bread, but I am perishing here in famine!
- Luke 15:18 I will rise up and go to my father, and I will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you.
- Luke 15:19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.
- Luke 15:20 And he rose up and came to his own father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion, and he ran and fell on his neck and kissed him affectionately.
- Luke 15:21 And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.
- Luke 15:22 But the father said to his slaves, Bring out quickly the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet.
- Luke 15:23 And bring the fattened calf; slaughter it, and let us eat and be merry,
- Luke 15:24 Because this son of mine was dead and lives again; he was lost and has been found. And they began to be merry.
- Luke 15:25 Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing,
- Luke 15:26 And calling to him one of the servants, he inquired what these things might be.
- Luke 15:27 And he said to him, Your brother has come, and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he has received him back healthy.
- Luke 15:28 But he became angry and was not willing to enter. And his father came out and entreated him.
- Luke 15:29 But he answered and said to his father, Behold, so many years I have been slaving for you and have never neglected a command of yours, and you have never given me a goat that I might be merry with my friends;

Luke 15:30 But when this son of yours came, who devoured your living with harlots, you slaughtered for him the fattened calf.
 Luke 15:31 And he said to him, Child, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.
 Luke 15:32 But we had to be merry and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life, and he was lost and has been found.

1. We need to shepherd one another in love—1 Cor. 13:1-13.

1 Cor 13:1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels but do not have love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.
 1 Cor 13:2 And if I have the gift of prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.
 1 Cor 13:3 And if I dole out all my possessions to feed others, and if I deliver up my body that I may boast, but do not have love, I profit nothing.
 1 Cor 13:4 Love suffers long. Love is kind; it is not jealous. Love does not brag and is not puffed up;
 1 Cor 13:5 It does not behave unbecomingly and does not seek its own things; it is not provoked and does not take account of evil;
 1 Cor 13:6 It does not rejoice because of unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;
 1 Cor 13:7 It covers all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
 1 Cor 13:8 Love never falls away. But whether prophecies, they will be rendered useless; or tongues, they will cease; or knowledge, it will be rendered useless.
 1 Cor 13:9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part;
 1 Cor 13:10 But when that which is complete comes, that which is in part will be rendered useless.
 1 Cor 13:11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I thought as a child, I reasoned as a child; since I have become a man, I have done away with childish things.
 1 Cor 13:12 For now we see in a mirror obscurely, but at that time face to face; now I know in part, but at that time I will fully know even as also I was fully known.
 1 Cor 13:13 Now there abide faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

2. Love is the most excellent way for us to be anything and to do anything—12:31b:

1 Cor 12:31b ... And moreover I show to you a most excellent way.

a. God has given us a spirit of love—2 Tim. 1:7.

2 Tim 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of sobermindedness.

b. Since God is love and since we have been regenerated by God to be His species, we should be love—1 John 4:8; John 3:6.

1 John 4:8 He who does not love has not known God, because God is love.

John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

3. The Body of Christ builds up itself in love—Eph. 4:16.

Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

IV. Christ is the good Shepherd, the great Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd, and the Shepherd of our souls—John 10:9-17; Heb. 13:20-21; 1 Pet. 5:4; 2:25:

John 10:9 I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved and shall go in and go out and shall find pasture.

John 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly.

John 10:11 I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

John 10:12 He who is a hireling and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.

John 10:13 He flees because he is a hireling and it does not matter to him concerning the sheep.

John 10:14 I am the good Shepherd, and I know My own, and My own know Me,

John 10:15 Even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

- John 10:16 And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must lead them also, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one flock, one Shepherd.
- John 10:17 For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.
- Heb 13:20 Now the God of peace, He who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, in the blood of an eternal covenant,
- Heb 13:21 Perfect you in every good work for the doing of His will, doing in us that which is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.
- 1 Pet 5:4 And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.
- 1 Pet 2:25 For you were like sheep being led astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.
- A. As the good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus came that we may have life and may have it abundantly—John 10:10-11:
- John 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly.
- John 10:11 I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.
1. He laid down His soul-life, His human life, to accomplish redemption for His sheep that they may share His zoe life, His divine life—vv. 11, 15, 17.

John 10:11 I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

John 10:15 Even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

John 10:17 For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.
 2. He leads His sheep out of the fold into Himself as the pasture, the feeding place, where they may eat freely of Him and be nourished by Him—v. 9.

John 10:9 I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved and shall go in and go out and shall find pasture.
 3. The Lord has formed the Jewish and Gentile believers into one flock (the church, the Body of Christ) under His shepherding—v. 16.

John 10:16 And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must lead them also, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one flock, one Shepherd.
- B. God raised up from the dead “our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, in the blood of an eternal covenant”—Heb. 13:20:
1. The eternal covenant is to consummate the New Jerusalem by shepherding.
 2. The eternal covenant is the covenant of the new testament to gain a flock, which is the church issuing in the Body of Christ and consummating in the New Jerusalem.
- C. As the Chief Shepherd, Christ shepherds His flock through the elders of the churches—1 Pet. 5:4:
- 1 Pet 5:4 And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.
1. Without the elders’ shepherding, the church cannot be built up.
 2. The elders’ shepherding should be Christ shepherding through them.
- D. As the Shepherd of our souls, the pneumatic Christ oversees our inward condition, caring for the situation of our inner being—2:25:
- 1 Pet 2:25 For you were like sheep being led astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.
1. He shepherds us by caring for the welfare of our soul and by exercising His oversight over the condition of our inner being.
 2. Because our soul is very complicated, we need Christ, who is the life-giving Spirit in our spirit, to shepherd us in our soul, to take care of our mind, emotion, and will and of our problems, needs, and wounds.

V. “Shepherd the flock of God...according to God”—5:2:

- A. *According to God* means that we live God—1 Thes. 3:8; 5:10.
- 1 Thes 3:8 Because now we live if you stand firm in the Lord.
- 1 Thes 5:10 Who died for us in order that whether we watch or sleep, we may live together with Him.

- B. When we are one with God, we become God in life and nature but not in the Godhead, and we are God in our shepherding of others—Rom. 11:24.
Rom 11:24 For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree and were grafted contrary to nature into the cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree!
- C. To shepherd according to God is to shepherd according to God's nature, desire, way, and glory, not according to our preference, interest, purpose, and disposition.
- D. To shepherd according to God is to shepherd according to what God is in His attributes—Eph. 4:18; 1 John 4:8; Rev. 15:3.
Eph 4:18 Being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance which is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;
1 John 4:8 He who does not love has not known God, because God is love.
Rev 15:3 And they sing the song of Moses, the slave of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and wonderful are Your works, Lord God the Almighty! Righteous and true are Your ways, O King of the nations!
- E. In order to shepherd according to God, we need to become God in life, nature, expression, and function:
1. We need to be filled to the brim with the divine life, enjoying the Triune God as the fountain, the spring, and the river to become a totality of the divine life, even to become the divine life itself—John 4:14; Col. 3:4.
John 4:14 But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall by no means thirst forever; but the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water springing up into eternal life.
Col 3:4 When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.
 2. We need to become God in His attributes of love, light, righteousness, and holiness.
 3. We need to be the reproduction of Christ, the expression of God, so that in our shepherding we express God, not the self with its disposition and peculiarities.
 4. We need to become God in His function of shepherding the flock of God according to what He is and according to His goal in His economy.
- F. If we would shepherd according to God, we need to become one with God—John 14:20; 1 Cor. 6:17:
John 14:20 In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.
1 Cor 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.
1. The basic principle of the Bible is that in His economy God is making Himself one with man and man one with Him—John 15:4; 1 Cor. 6:17.
John 15:4 Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.
1 Cor 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.
 2. God desires that the divine life and the human life be joined together to become one life that has one living—John 6:57; Gal. 2:20.
John 6:57 As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.
Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
- G. Shepherding according to God requires that we be constituted with God—Eph. 3:17a; Col. 3:10-11:
Eph 3:17a That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, ...
Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,
Col 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.
1. God desires to dispense Himself into our being so that our being may be constituted with His being to be one constitution with His being—Eph. 3:17a; Col. 3:10-11.

- Eph 3:17a That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, ...
 Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,
 Col 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.
2. As the Divine Being, God infuses us with His element, causing us to be the same as He is in life and nature but not in the Godhead—2 Cor. 13:14.
 2 Cor 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
- H. Only those who live God can shepherd according to God—Phil. 1:21a:
 Phil 1:21a For to me, to live is Christ ...
1. God's economy is to work Himself into us so that we may receive Him as our life and life supply in order to live Him—John 11:25; 6:48, 57.
 John 11:25 Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live;
 John 6:48 I am the bread of life.
 John 6:57 As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.
 2. We are participating in the divine life and the divine nature so that we can live God in our humanity—Gal. 2:20.
 Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
- I. As those who would shepherd according to God, we need to represent God and function as the acting God:
1. Jehovah made Moses "God to Pharaoh"; in Moses, God had one to represent Him and to execute His will—Exo. 7:1; 3:16-18; 5:1.
 Exo 7:1 And Jehovah said to Moses, See, I have made you God to Pharaoh; and Aaron your brother will be your prophet.
 Exo 3:16 Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, I have surely visited you and seen what is being done to you in Egypt.
 Exo 3:17 And I say, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey.
 Exo 3:18 And they will listen to your voice. And you shall come, you and the elders of Israel, to the king of Egypt, and you shall say to him, Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to Jehovah our God.
 Exo 5:1 And afterward Moses and Aaron came and said to Pharaoh, Thus says Jehovah the God of Israel, Let My people go that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.
 2. As the representative of God, Samuel was the acting God—1 Sam. 1:11; 2:35; 7:3; 8:22:
 1 Sam 1:11 And she made a vow and said, O Jehovah of hosts, if You will indeed look upon the affliction of Your female servant and remember me and not forget Your female servant, but give to Your female servant a male child, then I will give him to Jehovah for all the days of his life, and no razor will come upon his head.
 1 Sam 2:35 And I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest, who will do according to what is in My heart and in My mind; and I will build him a sure house; and he will go before My anointed continually.
 1 Sam 7:3 Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, If you are returning with all your heart to Jehovah, remove the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from your midst, and direct your heart to Jehovah and serve only Him; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines.
 1 Sam 8:22 Then Jehovah said to Samuel, Listen to their voice, and appoint a king to them. And Samuel said to the men of Israel, Go, each one to his city.

- a. Samuel could be the acting God because his being and God's heart were one—2:35.
1 Sam 2:35 And I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest, who will do according to what is in My heart and in My mind; and I will build him a sure house; and he will go before My anointed continually.
 - b. Samuel's living and working were for carrying out whatever was in God's heart.
 3. In his ministry Elisha the prophet, as the man of God, behaved himself as God's representative, as the acting God; today we, the believers in Christ, can be the same—2 Kings 4:9; 1 Tim. 6:11.
2 Kings 4:9 And she said to her husband, Now I know that this man who continually passes through unto us is a holy man of God.
1 Tim 6:11 But you, O man of God, flee these things, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, meekness.
- J. To shepherd according to God is to minister God to others—2 Cor. 13:14:
2 Cor 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
1. The Triune God is embodied in Christ and realized as the consummated Spirit; this is the God whom we worship, proclaim, and minister to others—Col. 2:9; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 1:3-4, 12, 15-16; 2:10; 13:14.
Col 2:9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,
1 Cor 15:45b ... the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.
2 Cor 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassions and God of all comfort,
2 Cor 1:4 Who comforts us in all our affliction that we may be able to comfort those who are in every affliction through the comforting with which we ourselves are comforted by God.
2 Cor 1:12 For our boasting is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in singleness and sincerity of God, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and more abundantly toward you.
2 Cor 1:15 And in this confidence I intended to come to you previously that you might have double grace,
2 Cor 1:16 And through you to pass through into Macedonia, and again from Macedonia to come to you and be sent forward by you into Judea.
2 Cor 2:10 But whom you forgive anything, I also forgive; for also what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, it is for your sake in the person of Christ;
2 Cor 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
 2. If we would minister God to one another, we need to speak words of grace, truth, spirit, and life, ministering the processed God who has been wrought into our being—Eph. 3:16-17a; 4:25, 29; John 6:63.
Eph 3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,
Eph 3:17a That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, ...
Eph 4:25 Therefore having put off the lie, speak truth each one with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.
Eph 4:29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but only that which is good for building up, according to the need, that it may give grace to those who hear.
John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.