

## Feed My Sheep...but which ones Lord?

The other morning, I actually had a dream wake me up. Normally I rarely remember dreams or in such detail as the one that woke me up. I dreamt that I was sharing God's Word in a crowd of people, walking among them and not so much behind a pulpit. I felt moved by God's Holy Spirit and knew it wasn't me speaking but I *heard* and *felt* the message clearly; "Feed **MY** Sheep." This really got me thinking, just what does He mean, "Feed My Sheep."

We can read this in the Gospel of John. In **John 21: 15-17**- "So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. [16] He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. [17] He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep."

Why did Jesus press Peter three times, asking him if he loved Him? What did he mean by His instructions feed my sheep? The Free Dictionary defines feed as, "To give food to; supply with nourishment." I know there have been numerous sermons and articles written on this topic but something has become crystal clear. Jesus knew Peter loved Him, but He was giving a set of marching orders; an overview of the role Peter was taking. Not only Peter but anyone who hears God's calling and accepts the assignment. If we truly love Jesus Christ, we must feed His sheep.

We know that God refers to His followers as sheep throughout the Bible (**Psalm 78:52, Psa. 95:7, Isaiah 53:6, Ezek 34:11, 12, Zech. 13:7, Matt. 10:6, 16, 12:11, 18:13, John 10:4, 14, 27, Heb. 13:20**).

In researching this on-line, I found several websites that supposedly answer Bible questions. I was curious as to what type of responses were given to this question of “feed my sheep.” It is apparent which ones are answered by “Sunday Churcher’s”, especially some of the comments that followed. We are to feed *His* sheep for sure, but we had better be feeding them the truth. So, just *who are His sheep?*

**1 Peter 5:2** provides a scriptural answer identifying His sheep. “Feed the flock of God that is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;” This says we are to feed those of God’s flock (**Song of Sol. 2:16, Eze. 34:15, 23**), the ones He has already called (**John 6:44**). Does this mean we are to ignore the others? Certainly not as this would seemingly contradict **Matthew 28:18-20** (The Great Commission). But I can see how a “Catch 22” could arise in a dissenter’s mind. “How indignant those Followers of Christ are, not sharing His Word unless they are a believer...” Not so. We are to readily share God’s truth with anyone He brings to us. Baptize those who repent and so wish to follow. Our conduct should reflect the light of God that He may draw them. Handing out tracks in a parking lot? Maybe not. He tells us in **Matthew 7:6**- “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and rend you.” We have been entrusted with the precious Truth of God and we are not to throw it on the ground. Jesus warns us in **Matthew 23:15** of such in how we share the truth, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more

the child of hell than yourselves.” He makes it clear what happens when shepherds fail their flocks as well (**Jer. 23:1-2**).

Now this is not an attack on folks who go to Sunday church. It is simple scripture quoting Jesus warning us on leading others astray. Judgment will begin in the house of God (**1 Peter 4:17**). If we preach any other Gospel we are accursed (**Gal. 1:8**). “Say the sinner’s prayer and be born again and you’ll go to heaven... (we know that’s a lie per Jesus, **John 3:13**)” “buy your miracle spring water...”, I won’t go off on a tangent but we know what’s out there and how deceptive the enemy is (**John 8:44**).

Jesus is our Good Shepherd (**John 10:11**). He is the Door of the sheepfold (**John 10:9**). By describing His people as sheep, He is emphasizing their nature as a flock and followers. Sheep are often thought of as less intelligent animals but this is not so. Yes, I checked on line and found sheep can be quite intelligent. They are docile to a point (the rams are the exception) and flock by nature but can think individually. The role of the shepherd is to care for, tend and feed the flock from the lambs to the full-grown ewes and rams. We too as shepherds are to care for those in God’s flock in much the same way. The food we share is the Word of God (**Deut. 8:3, Matt. 4:4, Luke 4:4**). We must be cognizant of those we serve. Not all are ready for solid food (**Isaiah 28:9, Luke 12:42, 1 Cor.3:2, 1Peter 2:2**). We are to tend, care for, and provide spiritual food for God’s people, from the youngest lambs (newest members) to the full-grown sheep (those who have been around awhile...). To remain in constant service to nurture and care for them, growing them into the fullness of their spiritual maturity (**Heb. 5:12-14**).

Earlier this week, Pam shared scriptural question via email. It is such an honor to share God’s Word and a joy to research and answer a sister’s question using scripture. The Truth we have been given is to be cherished. In nourishing one

another with the Word of God, we in turn experience growth and service (**Prov. 27:17**).

Times being what they are, I sincerely believe the door of the Ark is closing as you've heard me say several times. As a fellowship, it is our responsibility to each other to strive to grow in God's Word grace, knowledge and wisdom. We are in training for our future "positions" as citizens of God's Kingdom. Providing the flock with the food and nourishment of God's Word, is plainly our role as a shepherd. By these actions and our conduct, is how we can truthfully answer The Lord when He asks us the question "do you love Me?" We can answer with a resounding, yes, we do! "Then feed My sheep!"

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