

THE SHEPHERDS OF ISRAEL

Part II of V

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YE FEED NOT THE FLOCK:

(CONTINUED)

Man, in order to bring forth righteousness must be in submission to the Holy Spirit. It does not matter how honest my motives are and how conscientious and good my intentions might be, if my works are not of the Holy Spirit, they CANNOT PLEASE GOD. David wanted to build a House for God. His motives were pure, and more than just pure motives, he had received a direct word from God to prepare materials for the building; but God said no; It was not his perfect will for him to do it. He already had a man for the job; that was his son Solomon.

The strangest paradox in the preaching of the Gospel is that men will be using the Bible which is the word of God and not speaking the word of God. Take any word of God out of context and it either conveys the wrong meaning or utterly misrepresents God. Let us take a well known passage which is commonly misused:

“Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.” (Mark 16:15)

Is God sending everybody into all the world to go and preach the gospel? Is He telling us that we must all baptize one another? Certainly not; God is telling the disciples to go and He will deal with everyone on a personal basis. How could you send someone into “---all the world---“when he is yet stumbling around in his Jerusalem, and had not gone through Judea or Samaria. He has not “—run with the footmen, how is he going to compete with horses”?

Even as God ordains that a man must be responsible for the providing and taking care of his household, so also God himself has made provision for his household, the Church. The flock therefore, that feeds at God’s dining table will grow up in Him and will prosper spiritually and will bring forth fruit unto God. I must here describe what the Spirit thinks is fruit ‘—unto God—‘: Fruit unto God is that which glorifies God and does not accrue to man’s glory

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or upliftment. Let me give you a hypothetical example: If an evangelist goes out to preach and he does it with all conscientiousness and diligence, but in doing so he had the motive to be a pastor and to have his own church where he would be the head, then, no matter how well his efforts are crowned with success, before God he is a loser. He will reap earthly success, and God will do this to pay him for his efforts in bringing men into the Kingdom, but he will not be storing up treasure in heaven, it will only be hay, wood and stubble, and it will be possible that such a person could become a castaway in the end.

Colossians 3:17 "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

This carries out the point that God is only pleased with thoughts and actions which are done in the NAME of Jesus, or in other words, the NATURE OF JESUS CHRIST.

The Lord therefore, has ordained a ministry in the earth to feed His flock, and He has made adequate provision for them to grow in Him. The ultimate goal of God is that his sons should come forth in the image and likeness of Jesus Christ, who is the pattern son. This we find clearly stated in Romans 8:29:

Rom. 8:29 "For whom he did foreknow, he did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."

Any movement in the life of the believer which makes him more Christlike is considered growth in the eyes of the Lord. Not so in the contemporary churches: Growth in the church world is knowing the specific doctrines and being able to give a good testimony of God, even though sometimes God does not have a good testimony of the believer. In spite of the churches and the modern denominational system, believers are being fed of God. Some cattle can survive on little to nothing, and even thrive under conditions which would be impossible for others to live. We have some cows which will go upon a bare piece of ground and dig the roots out of the soil to eat. We call these desert cattle. I see most of God's people as desert cattle, and I rejoice that they are still alive.

Nevertheless, the move of God to bring forth shepherds to His flock is well advanced, and we should look out for an entirely different ministry springing up from the hand of the Lord.

THE PROOF THAT THE FLOCK IS NOT BEING FED IS IN THE FACT THAT INSTEAD OF THE PEOPLE COMING TO BE MORE LIKE JESUS MOST ARE BECOMING SPIRITUAL DWARFS AND SHOWING SYMPTOMS OF DISEASE – RESISTANCE TO MEAT OR ANY FORM OF NOURISHMENT – A LONGING AFTER GARBAGE FOOD -, which are signs of anemia -. Any believer who has a tendency to follow a man contrary to the word of God is a babe yet. Signs of respecter of persons, is another symptom of this awful

malady. Awful malady it is indeed, because it speaks of idolatry – putting the creature in the place of the creator -.

When the flock is well fed, the gifts of the Spirit will be abundant in the congregation. I do not mean the low energy generalization called prophecy which we so often hear, or the discernment of evil in others, which is so easy, but the true discernment of the butter and honey of the word. I have seen many prophets in the church who cannot discern the truth. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and all the prophets prophesied over their heads, they did not know the truth of what they were prophesying, and the scripture records that they diligently enquired of the things they prophesied, but were told it was not for them but for us. Even devils can tell you things about your life in the past and to some extent they prophesy the future especially when they are dealing with things of darkness – accidents, death, etc., but the word of the Lord is only revealed to His own. On the other hand the people of God lack discernment which basically is the presence of the Holy Spirit. The most basic form of discernment is to discern between good and evil. This is a direct result of the spiritual food one eats: The following passage explains this principle:

Isaiah 7:15 “Butter and honey shall he eat that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.”

Yes, those who eat the butter which is the cream from the milk of the Word of God and the honey which is the fruit of the flower, which is truth, made sweet by the labor of the worker bee (neither male nor female), will be able to discern between good and evil, and will choose good. It is possible to feed on the words of Christ with man's interpretation and not be feeding on Christ. A MESSAGE FROM GOD MUST BE FROM GOD. Many messages are being delivered from the words of the Bible which are not of God. This ridiculous little story will prove the point. The children were told in Sunday school that when their names are called they should answer with a scripture verse. One boy facetiously said, *“Jesus wept.”* Of course this is the shortest verse in the Bible. The teacher said, *“Give me a better verse than that,”* whereupon the boy said, *“And Judas went out and hanged himself.”* The teacher was not satisfied since the idea was to speak verses of blessing and upliftment, so she asked for yet a better verse, whereupon the boy said, *“Go thou and do likewise.”* These are all legitimate scripture verses, but they were used divisively to convey a thought which is not of God. Listen to the sermons of our modern churches and you will find that most of them are designed to either purport a doctrine or accrue some benefit to the organization, otherwise they are designed to touch the emotions of the people for some human purpose. The end result is not to glorify God. ONLY THE DIVINE GOD CAN FEED THE HUNGRY SOUL OF MORTAL MAN.

The pertinent question at this point is: How is it then that I have been fed and blessed by many of the churches and groups? Please believe that the reason is because of your condition. The proof is that you will notice that there were some places where you received blessing years ago which cannot now bless you. It is because you have grown and the milk or meat which they

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offered and which you gladly received, can no longer satisfy your hunger. The word of God and the life which flows from Jesus are on different levels, according to the where we are. The scripture declares that milk is for those who are yet babes and whose senses are not exercised to take meat; then of course another classification is "strong meat". So we have (1) Milk; (2) Meat; and (3) Strong Meat. Each of these stages is necessary; but if a babe continues to take milk and be a babe too long, then that babe is suffering from some type of spiritual disease and have need of medical attention.

THE DISEASED HAVE YE NOT STRENGTHENED:

The strengthening of the diseased sheep is part of the God given duty of the shepherd ministry. Shepherds are appointed of God and cannot be ordained of man or any group or segment of the church. Nevertheless the spiritual endowment must be recognized by the church. When God, through His prophet complains that his ministers do not take care of the flock and that those who are diseased are not being tended, it means that the shepherds are not in submission to the Holy Spirit and that the work of the shepherds who God has endowed with His heavenly graces is being put aside for other things. God has provided the necessary graces to deal with them effectively to bring healing and comfort to the diseased and oppressed. Is this job being done by our shepherds? YES, and NO is the candid answer. Yes by the few who are being led of the Spirit, and No for the majority who are being led and motivated by self and the world. God bless the naïve brethren who will say, "but they are doing good, and they are spreading the gospel." I say yes, they are doing some good, and yes they are spreading the gospel, but that they are doing all this because God must get His glory and it is not because of what they are doing but in spite of it. In other words, God would not allow one soul to go to hell because of my disobedience, but I cannot say that because of my disobedience a soul was saved. God is using the disobedient and paying them in this life for what good they do, but they are LOSERS who are sending up hay, wood and stubble as their treasure in heaven. I am writing this so that we might turn away from working outside of the perfect will of God and daily seek His will.

Jesus cried, "*I come to do thy will Oh God-*." Is it possible that we could come to that consciousness and cry the same cry? "*Father, I COME to do thy will.*" In other words, there is no other reason for me to live, but to do thy will. "God let me not continue in this twilight zone, but let me dwell in the center of thy will." Could we pray this from our hearts?

In the same way there are diseases in the natural so also there are diseases in the spiritual. In order to deal with a spiritual disease the believer should undergo an examination just as in the natural with the exception that his/her natural body would not be under scrutiny, but that spiritual being to

first identify the problem and then the cause. The foundation of this examination would be based on the fact that the person is saved. (knows Jesus as his/her personal saviour) – {having had a personal experience of his sins being forgiven and a healthy desire to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ}. Every spiritual disease is manifested in the believer because he has some weakness which he has not yet allowed the Spirit to deal with. The Holy Spirit on the other hand is moving in his life to seek occasion to deal with the matter. The resistance therefore to the Spirit stems from the soul. Soul, being Mind, and Emotions, Will and Desire, is the seat of the problem. Is there some evil or error in my thinking? Would be the first question: Is there some sin or error in my emotional life: (This does not need any explanation, since wrong feelings and wrong emotional experiences are both secret and common among believer): Is there some weakness in my will to serve the Lord? Do I lack the will to pray or to do the things which I know will make me spiritual, like fasting, or being quiet, to meditate on the word? Are my desires God's desires for me, for my family, for the Body of Christ? Are my desires still yearning after the leeks and garlic of Egypt? (figuratively speaking). Am I still being sometimes drawn into fantasies of the imagination which are not of God? MOST OF THESE QUESTIONS FOR MOST CHRISTIANS CAN BE ANSWERED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. The weaknesses which will be exposed when we answer these questions are the things the Lord wants us to bring to Him. Many individuals cannot handle these things of themselves. We need the God appointed shepherds to help the sheep to be rid of spiritual diseases. The reason is that for the most part spiritual diseases are infected by demon activity. In the same way that tetanus or any viral bacteria works in the natural, so do demons work in the spiritual. Wherever there is a dark area of the soul evil spirits will find a home. If a man loves liquor, sooner or later he will get an alcoholic spirit to enhance his desire. If a man is given to lust of all kinds or any kind then, he will get spirits of lust to help him. Soon he will not be able to help himself and will even be hearing messages from the wrong spirits thinking it is from God. A little poem from past years says:

“Bad thoughts a thief
Creeps through the window of the heart
Once finds its way
Lets a thousand robbers in.”

The mystery of iniquity is of such that it anesthetizes its victims and hypnotizes them to believe a lie. The shepherds who are well meaning but not in close touch with the Holy Spirit do not have the necessary spiritual endowment to “strengthen the sheep that are diseased.” The word of the Lord bears this out perfectly:

Luke 4:18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted,

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to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,”

Jesus himself says that the reason he is able to preach the gospel, heal the broken hearted, recovering the sight to the blind, set at liberty them that are bruised, preach deliverance to the captives, is because He was anointed of the Spirit. Without the anointing of the Spirit no man will be able to do the work of God.

(To be continued)

STRENGTHENED:

