

# The Concerns of the Great Shepherd

**Scripture:** 1 Peter 5:1-4 *“Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, 2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; 3 nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. 4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.”*

## **Introduction:**

This church has been here for more than 50 years now. If we were to look at the history of this church, we would see that many people have been lead to Christ, some have fallen asleep in the Lord. Many have grown to great spiritual heights, and those who have moved away have taken those seeds of growth with them and helped others. We have taught people over seas with world bible school. We have supported many mission efforts. In this life I think we will never know the total impact that we have had on this world for the Lord.

But with every sunny day comes the rain. Some of our dear Christian brothers and sisters have chosen to walk the paths of this world and leave our presence and fall away from the truth. Through the years at different times turmoil has existed here as in most places. And the plain simple truth is, we have missed many opportunities to teach people about God.

So understanding these truths, I’ve been thinking about the future of the Lord’s church in this place. Will we continue to focus on bringing glory to God in the church (Eph 3:21), will we turn to entertainment worship like much of the world. Will our focus be on ourselves, that is will the whole of our relationship with God be confined within the walls of this place.

We the Cedarloo Church of Christ, more so than ever, stand at a fork in the road. And with that in mind, I am so glad that God has raised up men among us to help guide us in the ways of the Lord. What an awesome God we have, that in His foreknowledge He prepared shepherds to walk among us, and today with the guidance of the Holy Spirit we are going to be installing 3 new elders.

## **Transitional Statement:**

But before we do, I want to take a few moments to remind our current shepherds and those that will be appointed today, that there are some things that should always be front and center with your shepherding responsibilities, and no greater place can they be seen than in the words of Jesus to God the Father concerning His sheep in John chapter 17.

### **I. First of all, in John chapter 17 we find that shepherds should be men of prayer**

A. Elders must be men of prayer.

1. Men of prayer look to God for guidance

a) And they understand the words of Jeremiah

Jeremiah 10:23 *"I know, O LORD, that a man's way is not in himself, Nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps."*

2. Men of prayer understand that God has all the answers.

a) Prayer should be your compass

3. You should never forget that there is power in prayer....Acts 4:31 *"Shaken"*

a) *"...The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."*  
James 5:16

B. As a matter of priority elders must keep the sheep in prayer before God.

1. Because, the truth is, the devil is a roaring lion seeking to devour them  
1 Peter 5:8

## **II. Then, shepherds should be willing to sacrifice for the sheep.**

John 17:1-2

*Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, 2 even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life.*

A. Here Jesus refers to the honor of His sacrifice on the cross for the purpose of bringing God glory.

1. Yes the sacrifice of the cross was honor and even Joy to Jesus...Heb 12:2

B. Definitely foundational for any elder is a deep willingness to sacrifice for his sheep.

1. You must hold deeply the words of Romans 12:1

*"Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship."*

C. A godly shepherd is one that would lay down his life for his sheep....John 10:11

1. Because the sheep's eternal life is at stake

### **III. Shepherds must help the sheep know God and Jesus**

John 17:3

*3 "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*

- A. The “*know*” here is a prolonged form of the verb, which points to a deep relationship.
  - 1. Elders must be focused in on helping the flock to know both God the Father and Jesus the Christ.
- B. Shepherds must help the flock grow closer to God, because when we draw near to Him...He will draw near to us ..James 4:8

### **IV. Shepherds always remember that the sheep belong to God.**

John 17:6

*6 " I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.*

- A. Shepherds must never forget that the sheep don't belong to him. The Sheep belong to God and the elders are stewards to guard and protect what is Gods. With that comes great responsibility and accountability...Heb 13:17
- B. And that the sheep have been entrusted to their care.

### **V. Shepherds must always help the flock to stay grounded in Christ.**

John 17:11

*11 "I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me..."*

- A. Shepherds must help the flock to always remember that Jesus is their road to salvation.
- B. That there is no other name under heaven given by which men must be saved. Acts 4:12
- C. That Jesus is the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Him...John 14:6

### **VI. Shepherds must help the flock be in the world but not of the world.**

John 17:15-16

*"I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. 16 " They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."*

- A. Shepherds should counsel heavily on not being unequally yoked with unbelievers 2 Corinthians 6:14

- B. They should help us to figure out how to live in this world without becoming part of it
- C. Shepherds should help the flock be transformed into the image of God.

Romans 12:2 “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...”

- D. And shepherds should always be reminding us that our citizenship is in heaven  
Philippians 3:20

1. That we are just pilgrims passing through a foreign land...Heb 11:13
2. And that we shouldn't be putting down roots here in a temporal setting.

**VII. Shepherds should continually guide the sheep in the sanctification that comes through the truth of God's word.**

John 17:17

*17 " Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. 18 "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.*

- A . Never to be forgotten by a shepherd is the truth and seriousness of John 4:24

That: *"God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."*

- B. That if we continue in the words of Jesus...we will know the truth, and the truth will make us free." John 8:31-32
- C. And that God's word is a lamp unto our feet and a light to our paths Psalms 119:105
- C. That through inspired scripture we are given all things pertaining to life and godliness  
2 Peter 1:3
- D. That God in His infinite wisdom hasn't left us to design our ideas about Him. But through scriptures has set forth a pattern of how He wants us to live...Phil 3:17
- E. And that our delight should be in the law of the Lord in which we should meditate day and night so that we can be like trees firmly planted by streams of water ...Psalms 1:2-3

**VIII. Shepherds should always be mindful of unity**

John 17:22-23

*"The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; 23 I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me."*

- A. Shepherds should always remember that kingdom work is grown through peace.

1. Jesus reminds us in Matthew 5:9 that “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”
- B. And the Apostle Paul tells us to be diligent to preserve the unity of Spirit in the bond of peace ...Eph 4:3
- C. And the whole book of 1 Corinthians stands as a testament to the need of unity in the church.
- D. Jesus spells it out plainly by saying: “Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself will not stand.” Matthew 12:25

### **IX. And finally shepherds must keep us grounded in love.**

John 17:26

*26 and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."*

- A. Shepherds must help us stay focused on key factor for our entrance into the eternal sheep pen....Love.
- B. The words of John call us back to very core of relationship with God.
  - 1 John 4:7 says: *“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.”*
- C. Love is the tie that binds our hearts together and to God 1 Corinthians 13
- D. And finally love is the ingredient of salvation that covers a multitude of sins.  
1 Peter 4:8

### **Conclusion:**

**Shepherds and those to be...Today Jesus charges you by example to be:**

- 1. Men of prayer**
- 2. Men of sacrifice**
- 3. Men helping the flock to know God and His Son**
- 4. Men who understand that the sheep belong to God.**
- 5. Men who help the sheep stay grounded in Christ**
- 6. Men helping the sheep learn how to live in this world without being of this world.**
- 7. Men who point to the sanctification that comes through God’s word**
- 8. Men who promote unity**
- 9. Men who are constantly stirring the waters of Love**