

The Shepherd And The Sheep... And Maybe A Few Goats

John 21:15-17 (ESV)

15 When they had finished 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."

16 He said to him 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, "Tend my sheep."

17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, 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 everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."

Mt. 9:36 (ESV) - When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Is Pastoral Authority Biblical?

Heb. 13:17 (ESV) - Obey your leaders and SUBMIT TO THEM, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

The very word "Pastor" means "shepherd"!

THIS is what the Bible says...

Acts 20:28 - Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

The gifting on the Pastor's life is to direct, teach, feed and correct the sheep!

2 Tim. 4:2 (ESV) - preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

Pastors have no more authority in people's lives than what the people give them!

2 Thess. 3:4 (ESV) - And we have confidence in the Lord about you, that you are doing and will do the things that we COMMAND.

2 Thess. 3:6 (ESV) - Now we COMMAND you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us.

1 Tim. 1:3 (MEV) - As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, continue to remain at Ephesus so that you might COMMAND some to teach no other doctrine,

1 Tim. 4:11-12 (ESV)

11 COMMAND AND TEACH these things.

12 Let no one despise you for your youth, but SET THE BELIEVERS AN EXAMPLE in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.

The role of the Pastor is both, Direct (Command and teach) and set an example!

1 Tim. 6:17-21 (ESV)

17 COMMAND those who are rich in this world that they not be conceited, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who richly gives us all things to enjoy.

18 COMMAND that they do good, that they be rich in good works, generous, willing to share,

19 and laying up in store for themselves a good foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of eternal life.

20 O Timothy, guard that (the Church) which is COMMITTED TO YOUR TRUST. AVOID PROFANE BABBLINGS AND OPPOSING VIEWS FROM SO-CALLED KNOWLEDGE.

21 By professing it, SOME HAVE ERRED CONCERNING THE FAITH.

1 Cor. 4:18-21 (ESV)

18 Now some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you.

19 But I will come to you shortly if the Lord wills. And I will know not only what those who are arrogant are saying, but also their power.

20 For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.

21 What do you desire? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and in the spirit of meekness?

Why do sheep need a shepherd?

I. Sheep are Valuable!

God's sheep are extremely valuable to Him!

There is not a single person in the world who is not valuable!

Why do sheep need a shepherd?

II. Sheep are Vulnerable!

Sheep are not aggressive...

They were not made to be predators!

In fact, if they act like a predator, beware because they are really a wolf in sheep's clothing!

Shepherds have to stay on wolf patrol and discern when a wolf is present to protect the sheep!

And sometimes, unfortunately the sheep don't understand and ignore the warning of the shepherd because they can sometimes be easily swayed by the wrong influences!

Why do sheep need a shepherd?

III. Sheep are Gullible!

Sheep must have someone provide direction for them.

If not, they will make poor choices and judgments!

Jesus is the Chief Shepherd...

Pastors are really under-shepherds working under the direction of the Chief Shepherd!

Jesus said, "My sheep know my voice, the voice of another they will not follow".

If a Shepherd is not there to lead the sheep to green pastures, they will eat anything...

And they make poor choices about what they eat!

Listen... just like some sheep, many feed their hearts and minds whatever is easily accessible!

Another thing about sheep is they can sometimes be too compliant to the wrong ones!

If a wolf wants to eat them... sometimes they let him!

It's a known fact that a sheep will stand there in one spot and let a Wolf or a coyote chew his back leg off!

Matthew 25:32-33 (ESV)

32 Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

33 And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left.

You can learn to identify goats because they are always wanting to "BUT" everything!

Goats will lead sheep astray putting them in danger of becoming an order of lamb chops for the wolf!

Goats have their own agendas!

They don't really care about the sheep... they just want what they want!

Spiritual goats have their own "vision" of how the sheep pen should be ran and as a result, they bring "Di-vision" (two vision, double vision) into the flock!

When they are listened to, they cause people to be double minded because they are double minded themselves!

1 Peter 5:5 (ESV) - Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

When you see somebody backbiting or complaining because they did not get their way or have not been promoted into leadership in the Church...

You know that you are in the presence of, not a sheep, but a goat!

Have you ever heard the term “Judas goat”?

Because a goat is bold and determined, sheep will follow him to the slaughter!

God’s Word tells us clearly how to deal with a divisive person...

It is by warning and then shunning or avoiding them!

1. That’s what God commands!

Romans 16:17 (ESV) - I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them.

Titus 3:10-11 (ESV)

10 As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him,
11 knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.

2. Goats destroy a church’s unity and witness!

Proverbs 6:16-19 (ESV)

16 There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him:
17 haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,
18 a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil,
19 a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.

John 17:21-23 (ESV)

21 that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

22 The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one,
 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

Jesus compares the unity He wants believers to have with the unity He has with His Father revealing how serious it is when a divisive person threatens it!

When there's division in church, the unbelieving world looks on and doubts the credibility of Christianity!

They couldn't care less about that person's eternal destiny...

They just want to be right!

3. Goats destroy a church's joy!

2 Sam 20:6 (ESV) - And David said to Abishai, "Now Sheba the son of Bichri will do us more harm than Absalom. Take your lord's servants and pursue him, lest he get himself to fortified cities and escape from us."

2 Samuel 20:1-2 (ESV)

1 Now there happened to be there a worthless man, whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjaminite. And he blew the trumpet and said, "We have no portion in David, and we have no inheritance in the son of Jesse; every man to his tents, O Israel!"

2 So all the men of Israel withdrew from David and followed Sheba the son of Bichri. But the men of Judah followed their king steadfastly from the Jordan to Jerusalem.

They turn people against each other!

4. Goats distract God's people!

5. Goats are "warped"!

Titus 3:11 (ESV) - knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.

The Greek word for "warped" is "ekstrephō" and this is the only place it occurs in Scripture.

It means, "To turn or twist."

Divisive people are "twisted."

6. Goats think they're the cause for righteousness!

Numbers 16:1-3 (ESV)

1 Now Korah the son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men.
 2 And they rose up before Moses, with a number of the people of Israel, 250 chiefs of the congregation, chosen from the assembly, well-known men.
 3 They assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron and said to them, "You have gone too far! For all in the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?"

Titus 3:10-11 (ESV)

10 As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him,
 11 knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.

Why take such a hard stance?

It's with the hope that one day they will repent and be restored!

In keeping with the goal of restoration, the role of the church must change after, ONLY AFTER, there is repentance.

What is our responsibility when the sinning party acknowledges their wrong and claims repentance?

According to Luke 3:8 when they “. . . bring forth fruits in keeping with repentance.”

Acts 26:20 - “. . . that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance.”

2 Cor. 2:5-8 (ESV)

5 Now if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure—not to put it too severely—to all of you.

6 For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough,

7 so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.

8 So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him.

But how do we know when repentance is genuine?

Genuine repentance will make itself evident by its deeds and attitude!

The repentant person will:

(1) Freely acknowledge his sin (1 Jn. 1:9; Prov. 28:13a).

The repentant person will:

(2) Cease the activity for which he was disciplined or at least seek help if it's a case of life dominating patterns (Prov. 28:13b; Gal. 6:1; Jam. 5:19-20).

The repentant person will:

(3) Make restitution and/or ask for forgiveness from those hurt as it is applicable (Phil. 18-19; Matt. 5:23-24).

The repentant person will:

(4) He/she will demonstrate a genuine change of heart, a real concern and godly sorrow over his actions, not in order to be forgiven, but because of the harm caused to the glory of God and the hurt caused others (2 Cor. 7:8-11; Ps. 51:17).

The repentant person will:

(5) He/she will begin to manifest the fruit of the Spirit and a concern for the things of Christ (Gal. 5:22f).

So, what was all of this teaching really about?

It's about the fact that the Good Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd, loves His sheep and has set up a place of safety for them!

And He has entrusted them into the hands of those whom He has called to be under-shepherds or Pastors.

He has authorized and equipped those Pastors to lead, feed and protect the sheep from those who would bring harm!

Jeremiah 3:15 (ESV) - "And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.

Ephesians 4:11-13 (ESV) - And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of

the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

Acts 20:28 (ESV) - Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.

Hebrews 13:17 (ESV) - Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.